Chats Behind Bars

BY

C. RAJAGOPALACHAR

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PUBLISHER, TRIPLICANE, MADRAS
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INTRODUCTION

I was in prison in 1930 with a large number of other Congress prisoners, mostly young men. Our Superintendent was a wise and considerate person who knew how to deal with gentlemen as well as to keep within the rules prescribed by the Government which he served. He did not believe in stupid isolation and ill-treatment. He allowed me the fullest freedom to organise classes and talks and prayer meetings to keep the young Satyagrahi prisoners properly engaged.

I gave many chats to the young men on all sorts of subjects. They liked some kind of occupation; and this was the motive of these talks, not a notion that I had anything scholarly or original to tell them. Some of these talks one of the prisoners managed to take down in Shorthand and has now put in shape for publication. I do not know if there is anything deserving of publication in them. But it may serve to entertain and give some insight into what sort of life we led in prison.

Gandhi Ashram,
Tiruchengodu,
14—8—'31.

C. RAJAGOPALACHAR.

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Chats Behind Bars

TREES AND PLANTS

Trees and plants breathe just as we breathe. There are more trees in this world than human beings. The vegetable kingdom is the biggest kingdom in this world. So when you look at plants and trees you should remember you stand before a majority. Man is not so important after all as the vegetable kingdom is. If there was democracy, and you took votes, trees would have the upper hand. If we must have democracy for governing India, why should not the world have it, in which case, the vegetable kingdom, the trees and plants would be the rulers.

If we stop the air for the trees they would die even if you allow the roots to go into the soil, just as a man would die if he were drowned or his nose and mouth shut. But there is a difference. What we breathe out we call bad air and what we breathe in we call good air, but what is bad air for us is good air for the trees. Whatever we eat and build our body with, we burn. We all burn our flesh.

The oxygen we take in burns the flesh and we throw out the resulting smoke. The trees take that refuse gas, separate the coal again and store it in their body so that we may eat it again. What we eat we digest only a part and throw away the refuse. It reaches the earth somehow or other, and finally the earth absorbs it. The roots pick it up again and make it good food such as bananas, tomatoes, mangoes etc. which we eat again.

The relationship between the vegetable kingdom and the human kingdom is that of a mother towards her child. Whatever we reject as bad or used up, the trees repair again, make the sweeetest things out of it and give it back to us as gently as a mother. Therefore you see what an important and beautiful part the trees play in the life of the world.

We have our nose, mouth, and lungs to breathe. What have the trees? They have beautiful green leaves. These are their nose and lungs. If you observe the trees you will find the leaves spread out so that they can take as much air and sunlight as they can. That is why trees try to reach the sunlight as quickly as possible by growing up higher and higher. If you plant a creeper under a tree it will try to wind itself round the tree and go to the top so that it may get at the sunlight. If you observe a forest or garden you will find the trees which are unhappily planted in the shade grow crooked and try to reach the sun somehow. Their main food is sunlight.

They are as full of life as ourselves and unlike our bodies which are useless after death the bodies of trees are useful even after death. Compare the beauty of the tree's hygienic life with the life of man. Man wanders

about, contracts bad habits and disease, and dies in a rotten manner. Trees' lives are fixed. They do not eat wrong food, they live a clean proper disciplined life, and their bodies are useful even after death. Some timber is as good as metal. Today one of the most famous men in India is the man who has discovered that trees can feel pain and have nerves just as man has. There is blood circulation in the trees as in the human body. If you cut a tree you will find it bleeding. If we want to take away a part of the tree for any reason, we should so cut it that the wound may heal easily. If you pluck it wrongly it suffers much though you cannot understand. If you want to cut a branch you should do it like a surgeon. If you take a sharp knife and cut it sharp, the wound will heal quickly; but if you pluck it or tear it with your hands, it makes a gashing wound which heals with difficulty. Supposing there is a sore or boil in the body, you do not use your nails. You use a lancet. Similarly if you want to cut a branch or pluck a fruit or flower you should do it carefully.

It is through the bark that the juice rises to the top, so that the green bark is a very vital part of the tree. Do not think you can cut it out recklessly, In the forest if they want to cut trees down, they cut the bark all round near the roots so that in course of time the trees dry away, there being no blood circulation.

Trees have their own marriages. There are two kinds of flowers in the plant world. One is male and the other is female, and male and female flowers must come into contact with each other before any fruit can be born. Do not imagine that the buds, the smile and laughter of the trees

during spring, or their beautiful fragrance is all for our sake. It is their own marriage ceremony, their own family joy. The male elements and female elements in flowers unite, do you know how ? It is even more wonderful.

The beautiful little insects, the flies, the bees and the ants carry the essence from one flower to another, and thereby trees fructify. Don't imagine these little insects are enemies to the flowers. They are the priests who perform their marriages. They are invited to the flowers for the honey in them, in order to perform their marriages. When they go to take the honey, the male *dhatu* sticks to their body and thus they carry on the *dhatu* from flower to flower. You may call the honey the priest's dakshina, dowry or the varadakshina which graduates insist on taking from the brides' fathers these days. But one thing you will notice, the dakshina these give is beautiful honey, whereas the dakshina we give is dirty coins. So the little insects which you look upon with such contempt are the things which provide the occasion for the tree's conception of fruits out of which we make all our food. Insects thus play a very vital part in the formation of our foodstuffs. Every grain we eat is a product of the union of sexes in flowers.

So that when you look at a tree look upon it as a mother. When you pluck a flower remember the surgeon, and that you will have to pluck it gently and carefully ; and when you see a little insect coming out of a flower look upon it as your dear little grandmother.

The question was asked whether certain trees bear only male flowers and certain other trees only female flowers, or whether both male and female flowers are in the same

tree. Most trees have male and female flowers in them, but some have only male and some have only female flowers in them. A tree is not one life only but in fact a tribe or a nation, and it has a number of lives in it; and they all live together one beautiful joint life. We have forgotten to live one life and divide ourselves into separate units. If in the body, hands or feet do not obey the brain or do their work properly, it would be called paralysis. If an Englishman is hurt the whole nation feels hurt like one life, because the English nation lives in unity like a single tree. But if anyone of us is hurt others do not feel so keenly; that is why we are in the present condition. We must re-build this unity. Do we not live like one life in the family? We have to expand it and understand that the whole nation is a family and that we should all live as one family. We must not hesitate but freely give what we have to the rest of the nation. This is the meaning of Patriotism, to feel the joy of a mother or a brother in the general national welfare.

Do you know how a hen brings forth a young chicken? It lays eggs and I suppose many of you have seen an egg. It has a shell outside, and within a skin, and inside that are two thick fluids. One is white and the other is a small yellow portion. It is that yellow bit that becomes the little chicken. The white portion is the food for the yellow portion which is the bird. Now in human beings the egg is not laid outside but is inside the mother's womb for a long time. The white portion is the food for the yellow bird till it breaks the shell and comes out as a chicken. But when the human child is in the womb how is it fed by the mother? Through the navel string the blood of the

mother passes as much as wanted to the baby inside. You have seen a flower, there are petals and a stalk. The child is like a flower or fruit that gets its food through the stalk, the stalk being the navel string ; so that you can imagine the mother as a kind of tree and the little baby inside as a tender fruit connected by the stalk. When the fruit is ready to be plucked the stalk gets dried. So also when the baby can live outside, it is ready to come out. There is not much difference between the two.

Take a big fruit like the cocoanut. It is so high up. The fruit can fall down from that height, yet it won't be hurt because it has got a thick cover. You see then the object of all that quantity of fibre in the cocoanut. Now if you look at a cocoanut you can say which is its navel. You see the stalk by which it sticks to the tree. When it is separated it has its own life, like the baby which comes out of the mother's womb. You can look upon the cocoanut too as an egg. It has got its life portion—the little cocoanut tree is inside and it has got its food. The water and white kernel are its food until the little tree inside grows big and plants its roots in the soil. Don't imagine that the water and white kernel are for us to drink and eat. It is for the plant to live upon, until it breaks its shell and is able to take its sustenance from the ground. This is the story of the egg of the cocoanut tree. So also the paddy grain—the husk outside, and inside the husk the paddy baby. Inside that husk, the baby is provided food till it knows to live on the soil. We imagine that the rice is for man to eat, but it is for the young life lodged inside it.

SOCRATES

The World has produced some very great people. Among them one of the greatest was Socrates. He lived before Christ. He declared truths which Buddha declared, which Christ declared, and which Sree Krishna declared. Socrates was a poor man. He had a wife who did not care for what Socrates cared. Socrates wanted to help the people of the country, but his wife wanted to look after her own family and so they were quarreling with each other. But Socrates was a very patient man. Socrates lived among people who did not understand him well. They thought he was a troublesome man, that he disturbed the peace of the people. Christ was similarly disliked by the people of his time, so both these men were executed according to the law of their land. They were given legal trial and capital punishment. There was no hanging in those days in those countries. In Socrates' time the method of capital punishment in Athens was to make the condemned man drink poison. That was how Socrates was executed. Christ was also executed. He was not hanged but he was nailed to a piece of wood and left to die there. That was the legal method in the land of the Jews. But Christ has now become the ruler of the greater part of the world, and the very wood to which he was nailed to die has become the sign of civilisation in Europe. The national flag of England bears the symbol of the cross on which Christ was executed. If you observe the Union Jack you will find that it consists of three Crosses. The Cross is nothing but the instrument for Jewish capital punishment which reminds people of the death of Christ.

I told you about Christ because I want you to understand that Socrates is considered to be in the same category as Christ himself, except that pious Christians consider Christ to be God incarnate but Socrates is not so deified. Socrates was one of the great men who gave up their life for a principle. He was a saint among the Greeks. It is proper that the men, women and children of our country should understand his beautiful life. He lived 2400 years ago in Greece in a city called Athens, before the time of Asoka, after the time of Buddha. His mother was a nurse. His father was a professional sculptor. In Greece in those days, sculpture was nearly as common as carpentry amongst us. Socrates spent all his time in conversation with people on philosophical subjects and neglected his family affairs. He did not write anything himself, his disciples wrote what he talked.

During the time of Socrates Athens was a democratic city and governed itself, and it was the most famous city in the world, like London today. At that time Athens was full of politicians, philosophers, sculptors, poets, and dramatists like Ujjain in the time of Vikramaditya, and Patalipura in the time of Chandragupta. It was a democracy in which all the free citizens of the town took part and they appointed their own magistrates. Every citizen was bound to be present at the meetings. If he was absent he incurred a penalty. People took direct part in the administration of the city, they did not send their representatives. Even when trying a man for an offence all the citizens sat together and became the court. They would select a few people to be a sort of Jury. Anybody could be selected like that.

Socrates served in the army for some time. Once in a battle he saved the life of Alcibiades who was a great man of Athens. In another battle when the army of Athens fled in terror and only a few people stood boldly, among them one was Socrates. It is usual to think that philosophers have no physical courage, but it is not true. There are many who are bold and courageous as well as saintly in their character and Socrates was one of them.

At the time of Socrates there was a new movement in Greece. The ancient religion of the Greeks had begun to be disbelieved. People began to doubt the gods whom they worshipped, and men began to make research into scientific and philosophic truths. At that time some people thought that this kind of research and doubt would lead to confusion of society and they tried to suppress such doubts. Among them was a great dramatist called Aristophanes. He did not rightly understand the teachings of Socrates. He thought Socrates was a mere sceptic. He made fun of Socrates in one of his plays. He ridiculed him and an important section of the people began to hate Socrates like some people who believe that Mahatma Gandhi is encouraging and creating violence and bloodshed. The *Times of India*, the *Madras Mail* and other Anglo-Indian papers sometimes misunderstand and make fun of Gandhiji, and readers of these newspapers may hate Gandhi as a man creating trouble and bloodshed. One day they may even sit and try and hang Gandhiji—as Socrates was tried in Greece.

Socrates was an ugly man. His face was not beautiful. He had protruding eyes, and a big nose. His dress was poor and he went about in the streets talking to every

one he met. In fact, he was a well-known mad-cap. Everybody knew him. Aristophanes made him one of his characters. The orthodox people of Athens were very angry with Socrates and the others who tried to subvert the opinions of the people and make young men doubt their own religion. But Socrates was not an Atheist. Socrates did not want to create a revolution, but people classed him with other philosophers who did so. So Socrates was taken to be an enemy of the religion of his country, and so was tried for a capital offence.

We have today the speech which Socrates made at his trial and the conversation he had with his very intimate friends when he was in prison awaiting his punishment after the sentence was pronounced. The charges against him were that he denied the truth of the Greek gods, and he was misleading the youths of Greece. The law of Greece was that such an offence may be punished with death. So he was tried for it. There were 501 people in the assembly that sat to try him. 501 people had been drawn by lot from the people of Athens. There was no president or judge. There was a small poet called Meletus. He and another Anetus who was a leather merchant conducted the prosecution. They were very influential men. The influence of the prosecutors carried weight.

Supposing all the shop keepers of Madras sat to try me as a disturber of peace and order, and an important merchant like Jamal Muhammad Sahib made up his mind to conduct the prosecution, what chance would I have to escape?

Socrates made his speech. After his defence speech, they voted on the question whether he was guilty or not.

guilty. 281 voted that he was guilty and 220 that he was not guilty. As the majority voted that he was guilty it was so decided, and the prosecutor was asked to speak as to what punishment should be given. The procedure was that if any man was pronounced guilty the prosecutor should speak on what punishment was to be given to the accused. He claimed that capital punishment should be awarded. It was open to Socrates to plead for a lesser punishment. So Socrates made his second speech—so that we have two speeches, one on the main question whether he was guilty or not, and another on what punishment was to be awarded, After. hearing Socrates for a second time they inflicted capital punishment. Then Socrates made a final speech—a farewell speech—and was taken to prison. Now we shall read these speeches.

" RESIST NOT EVIL "

You have been here for many days and meeting every morning and evening and we have been talking on subjects small and big. When you go out I want you to feel that you have widened your outlook, and that you are in a way bigger than when you came in.

Your mind will have to reach even the stars, the sun and the moon, then alone you will understand Truth. If you narrow your vision Truth will only be apparent and you will be only moving in falsehoods.

You must first grasp fully how big the Universe is. Each star is a world in itself with a sun, moon and many planets like this earth. The knowledge that men have

attained, even the wisest amongst us is a mere atom; that which is unknown is a huge universe much bigger than the atom of knowledge which they have acquired. And yet we have to talk and act on the basis of the small knowledge that we have. It is in a spirit of humility that we must discuss any matter. Mankind's knowledge of the secrets of the Universe is as a whole so little. One man's knowledge is but an atom in that atom, and when you are so ignorant as to be prepared to hear lectures from me, how much smaller must you be! Consider therefore the depth of humility we should have in the pursuit of knowledge.

We can divide the world into two parts--one matter, and the other energy. Matter, you know, takes many shapes. Energy takes also all kinds of shapes. Mechanical energy is one shape. When you hit a thing, when you press a thing, when the engine pulls a train, when we fight or quarrel—mechanical energy is exhibited. When a man pulls down a house or builds a home it is this energy that he uses. Similarly sound is another form of energy. Sound reaches our mind and creates passions, sorrow, anger, hate, fear, and all kinds of ideas. The next form of energy is heat. Light is another form of energy. Then there is electricity. Magnetic force is another form of this electric force. A form of energy that we see every day in our families and daily life is the force of human love and affection. It is this love that makes man attached to man. So also hate is another form of this energy. Just as a horse can pull this way or that way, similarly, hate is the same energy as love—only they pull in opposite directions. Those who love each other very much—when they get into a quarrel, dislike each other more than

those who are indifferent to each other. If you have a mischevious horse it kicks back as forcibly as it goes forward, but not perhaps a buffalo. Now if you have ever driven a horse you will find that only good words and kind conduct make it a good horse. You can frighten it sometimes and make it go, but ultimately you will find that you have failed. You can ask any man who has experience of horses or cattle, he will tell you that it is only kindness that makes them work. If you employ force you will fail in bringing up animals. So is the case with human beings—husbands, wives, or children. If two of you quarrel you will find that if you develop good feelings towards the other, similar feelings will develop in the other man's mind. You may not know how this develops, but love or hate acts like electric power.

All the problems of life including Politics consist only in making men act as we want. In order to make another man act in a particular way, shall we use the energy of love, or hate and fear. That is the only issue in Satyagraha. Once upon a time a man found that by rubbing a rod of glass on a piece of silk he could with that glass draw little light pieces of paper to it. This little force which they first discovered, and which could only attract little pieces of paper or cork and could not go beyond, was afterwards discovered to be a universal mighty force with which they can pound mountains into powder, run trains, and light cities. Similarly the force of love can also be harnessed. It works effectively in quarrels between a husband and wife or in persuading son or child to act in a particular way. This force is to be harnessed in Politics—that is the effort of Satyagraha. It

may appear feeble in the beginning, but it is as mighty as electricity and as full of results.

In the methods of education in former times, angry words, angry looks and the rod were employed, and even mothers had no confidence in school masters who did not employ these. But love is the method now, laughter and joy is the prevailing method, and anybody who beats children is dismissed from the school. Similarly in Politics the method of hatred may rule now. But a time will come when the new method is bound to prevail. Even as the old school master has changed, so all things in life, politics included, will have to be altered in order that you may utilise the force of love. We shall find the force of love much more effective, much more speedy than the force of fear.

Do not imagine that truth is different for different things. It is the same thing throughout the world in the atom and in the sun. "Resist not Evil" is a quotation from the Bible and the text for all Satyagrahis including Tolstoy. Don't think that Mahatma Gandhi is the inventor of Satyagraha, don't think that Tolstoy invented it, don't think it was new when Christ stated it or even when Buddha stated it. In the earliest books of the world, you will find this truth, and I suppose we can claim that our Vedas are the oldest books in the world. The oldest knowledge in the world handed down through Buddha, Christ, Tolstoy, and Mahatma Gandhi of our own times has this truth, namely, that we should not resist evil. Some people imagine that the teachings of Christ and Tolstoy are different from the teaching of Mahatmaji in this matter, because Mahatmaji wants us to resist evil. Really there is no difference. The mean

ing of the word "resist" has to be properly comprehended; then the difference disappears. When you say "Resist not evil," it only means, "Do not return evil for evil, hatred for hatred." There is no difference whatever between the teaching of Christ and that of Mahatma Gandhi in this matter. To do good for evil is no doubt resistance of evil, but it is not that which was meant by "Resistance" when it was said, "Resist not evil". Don't resist evil with evil, resist it with good. Just as people would have laughed some time ago if when a boy failed to answer I said, "Don't beat that boy, be kind to him", some people would laugh when Gandhiji says, "Do good for evil". If you do good for evil, the man's mind will be altered at once; but if you return evil for evil, the mind will become doubly evil in answer. There is an enormous incalculable energy in good thoughts, good words, and good deeds—that energy we must harness and use.

The Satyagraha experiment that we are doing in India is not a mere nationalist experiment for getting our own liberty. God will help it only if it is a world force, only if India's battle is a step in the progress of the whole world. It is that which gives it its life and its importance. Our misfortunes are not real misfortunes. It is our great trouble that has compelled us to invent this method of warfare. The greater the evil, the greater the experiment; and the greater the glory that India will have in world-history. This must be our great ambition in carrying on the battle properly.

Just as the moment the principal or headmaster turns his back to the class, the old fashioned school-master opens his drawer and takes his cane out and the work

of months is spoiled in an hour, so also the labour of years will be spoiled if we falter or swerve even an inch from Non-violence. You may find all kinds of excuses, but Gandhiji says truly that if we have not succeeded quickly, it is because we have not been faithfully carrying out the principles of Satyagraha in its proper unmixed form. If any Englishman or European talks to Mahatmaji, at the end of the talk what does the European or Englishman think? "If all the people of India were like this man, it would be easy to solve the problem." All people are not like him. Our attempt must be to free all people from hatred. Each one must begin with himself.

BOLSHEVISM

I

You want me to give you a talk about Bolshevism. I shall do so. But I warn you that I do not know much about it, and so, if you are left in any doubts, you will have to clear them later on with somebody else.

Bolshevism does not consist in the joy that you may feel in pulling down those now in authority and power and enjoying that power yourself. Bolshevism is the even distribution of work. Life cannot go on without work. That work is unevenly distributed now. To distribute it evenly is the true aim of Bolshevism, or Socialism or whatever name you give it.

Some experiments in this even distribution of work and wealth have not been so successful as had been calculated. The idea of Bolshevism is that the whole world should

adopt an even distribution of work. It is only then that the full benefit of it could be perceived. On account of the present division of the world into several independent states, a true and even distribution of work throughout the world cannot be brought about at one point of time. Though Bolshevism is introduced in one country or Government, if capitalism rules in neighbouring states, the full advantages of Bolshevism cannot be realised even where it is introduced. You should not be misled by such disappointments. You do not think that cleaning up your house is useless, because though you keep your own house clean, the neighbour's houses are dirty and contaminate the air. You must go on till your spirit of cleanliness spreads. You must not be discouraged by the absence of immediate success or full benefit.

Now, Bolshevism, as I told you is an even distribution of work. Under it, there is no property for the individual. All the good things belong to all the people; and all the work in the world is a burden to be shared by all the people. There is no property for the individual, and everybody shares according to his needs and everybody shares the work also according to his capacity. You have no such thing as, "This is my house, this is my money, this will go to my son or this will go to my daughter, or my daughter's son." As much as I really want at any time I take. There is no such thing as, 'This is mine,' or, 'This is yours.' It is difficult to imagine this state of things now, because we have been so brought up in the idea of property that we cannot easily visualise a state of things in which there is no private property. But we can understand it step by step with the aid of examples.

Take for instance the use and possession of water. We do not ordinarily hold any quantity of water as our own and lock it up. Each takes what he wants and keeps it for his temporary use. There is no anxiety, no greed about it. No part of a river or reservoir of water is set apart as private property but it is used generally, and kept clean generally. If we extend this attitude to other sorts of property we can realise a little bit of Bolshevism. You may think that things which need the effort of man for production such as grains, food-stuffs etc., are of a different nature and that in respect of them individual ownership is necessary. But such a difference really does not exist. Postal work is done for the whole of the community in one lump, every man's letter reaches its destination and the organisation is conducted by the community as a whole. Similarly other needs can be met jointly and in the interest of all. Once upon a time there was no joint national postal system, and every man had to find his own messenger and to pay and feed him. Today it is abolished; in fact it is prohibited, and a national postal system is established. All these joint national services such as post office, public lighting, municipal sanitation, supply of gas or electricity for domestic purposes are all existing illustrations of Bolshevism. Time there was when a man who had no stomach-ache locked up the medicine in his own box, but today the medicine for stomach-ache is lying in the hospital for the use of those who have stomach-ache while those who have no stomach-ache have no right to it.

Take the mills of Bombay which produce cloth. It is the property of individuals, *viz.*, the share-holders. But these share-holders do not really control or manage their

property. They no doubt get dividends and go through the legal formalities of ownership. But the management is in fact entirely with the firms that are in possession. The share-holders may as well part with their rights to the whole State. The directors will then be the servants not of the share-holders but of the State. It would make no material difference if the mill, instead of being the property of some shareholders becomes the property of a corporate Government. The cloth will not become worse because the mill is owned by Government and not by A, B, C, and numerous others who do nothing but take dividends and watch for a good opportunity to sell their shares at a premium. Even now courts sometimes attach these concerns and appoint receivers to manage them. It makes no difference that the share-holders are ousted for the time being.

All the work that has to be done for the maintenance of a community and the production of its wealth may thus be conducted on its behalf through agents appointed by the community and not done as at present by private enterprise of individuals. Drama, music, operas can all be Bolshevised so as to afford pleasure to all. We have the Tirupati hill. It is not the property of any private individual. All go on pilgrimage and enjoy it. The Taj Mahal can be enjoyed by all ; Nobody claims it as his own property. In like manner all things of beauty can be maintained for and enjoyed jointly by all.

II

One great doubt that will oppress peoples' minds when they think on this subject is that things cannot be

done so well under public management as under private ownership. This difficulty arises because we cannot get rid of the existing state of things so far as our prejudices are concerned. Private property is the main thing prevailing. Public management in the midst of private property is not a good test of the possibilities of public management. The motive of private gain dominates. If private property is abolished, all our motives will be revolutionised. When there is no such thing as private property which you can keep for yourself and your children many difficulties and doubts regarding public management and Bolshevism will disappear.

You do not bring water from the river when there is a high flood and lock it up; similarly the whole of private property being abolished and reduced to the state of common water, nobody will care to steal or misappropriate or amass private property even as he would not think of stealing water when there is much of it available.

We have seen that in certain matters like public parks, railways, post offices, lighting, and roads, there is no individual property even in non-Bolshevik States, and all these are enjoyed by all according to the necessity of each individual and possessed by the community as a whole. A band of persistent people made up their minds that these things should be applied to all things, and have built up a theory of Society and Government. So we have Socialism or what is called Bolshevism.

After all, what is property? It is merely an order of things for the production of the things necessary for life and contributing to the welfare of humanity, such as food, clothing, &c. These can be manufactured and supplied in

common as well as separately. If there is a great famine we can imagine supply and distribution in common. There is nothing impossible about this. During times of great stress like war, the nation often takes charge of the entire supply of food, clothing, and transport, and distribution is made according to necessity and needs, not allowing any man to take or accumulate more than what is wanted. Banks which in former days were the personal property and concern of separate people, have become public and national and now you have the Co-operative banks, in which money that belongs to nobody in particular is managed and administered just as efficiently as private money but for the benefit of the whole community. It is not that co-operative money is to be thrown into the streets for people to scramble and fight for; it is kept in a particular place and looked after like any private money with care and circumspection. It belongs to nobody in particular but to all. It does not mean that the wealth of the nation is thrown broadcast in the streets but the advantages of it will be shared by all.

Bolshevism is a problem in mathematics. Is it good that some people should have much, other people should have less and some others should have nothing at all: or is it good that the whole is distributed on an average and everybody gets what he wants? Nothing will be lost, it is only a question of re-distribution. Now you can make this average by reducing figures and adjusting, or you may wipe out the slate clean and do by guess-work, you may commit errors and omissions until you arrive at the average. The procedure is not the point. It is the result that matters. For instance we can get rid of a disease by taking medicine

through the mouth into the stomach or by injection; or if we like we may cut off the diseased part by a surgical operation. All these are matters of procedure, ways to reach the same end. These experiments may sometimes end fatally or make the disease worse, but we must go on experimenting and learning from each failure.

One general result, therefore, of Socialism is that every man will hold his property as trustee for the nation and not for himself. The first important thing in holding property under Socialism is that you possess it not as an independent owner to spoil, destroy or improve as you like but as a tenant on behalf of the nation and therefore you will be looking after it on behalf of other people. Let us now take the paddy fields. Equal distribution does not mean that they will be divided into innumerable little uneconomical bits equally among all. They will be distributed in such units as are proper and convenient for the cultivation and raising of paddy crops among selected peasants who will hold it as trustees on behalf of the nation. Land will not be the private property of the peasants. Suppose you have a beautiful mill in Bombay, and the owners transfer it to the nation. This means that instead of producing for the Directors or Managers it will thereafter produce for the whole nation. Transfer to the Nation does not mean that it must be divided amongst all citizens, a screw for one, a wheel for another, a rod for a third and so on. Suppose mills are attached by the Court — they will be managed on behalf of the creditors— otherwise there is no difference

One great feature will be that the son will not look upon the father's property as something to be inherited.

Suppose I am a Treasury Officer, a trustee in a temple or a Tahsildar. Does my son look upon the funds in my hand as likely to become his own? No. But as regards private property the son looks upon his father's property with watering mouth as something kept away from him for only a time. In the Bolshevik state this will not be so. All property will be trust property held on behalf of the nation.

There are some things which can be done better by individuals, some things which can be done better by groups of people. Those things that can be done better by individuals will be entrusted to individuals, those that can be done better by groups to groups of people, but no individual or group will feel that the business is his or its own affair.

Would you, if you are a painter, paint a better picture if it is to be inherited by your son or grandson or if it is to be inherited by the nation? Suppose you have to build a house for yourself or a temple for the whole nation. On what would you bestow more attention, and into what would you put more beauty—on the house or on the temple? I have known many friends who even in the present order of things bestow more attention on public duties than on their own private affairs. In the same way, therefore, you need not despair that property, when it is made common, will not be administered properly.

III

I gave you a few illustrations yesterday that the ambition to serve the public, to create a beautiful thing for general use is often, in many respects, equally strong, if

not greater, than the ambition to make money for one's own use. I already gave the example of building a house for private use and a temple for general public use. Do you not give better attention to the temple and beautify it in various ways? Look at the enthusiasm and trouble spent in decorating the temple car. It does not follow that when a thing is made public property people will bestow less attention on it.

If I want to cook a dish of green leaves for myself I would simply boil it and put some salt and somehow finish with the bother, but if I ask Krishnan to make some dishes for a general feast he asks for a lot of ghee and sugar and other things in order to make them as sweet and savoury as possible. At the end of it he does not get his proper share but he has to take what remains at the bottom, but he is quite happy. Therefore let us not imagine, whatever other difficulties there may be, that things will get neglected by nationalisation. If we forget the idea of private property,—we shall do so only gradually —deceit, fraud, and misappropriation in order to amass private property will all be minimised and gradually disappear.

If you cannot keep property for yourself and leave it to your children and grand-children there will not be the motive for amassing wealth, there cannot be much motive to defraud, for you cannot keep much nor keep it long. It will become public within a short time. In the beginning there may be some of the old tendency on account of the long established psychologies of private property; but it must wear away in the long run, when you will have only public benefit in view. If you have private property on

the one side and public property on the other side you will bestow less attention on public property ; but if you have only public property, all your attention will be bestowed on it. Your whole attitude of mind will be changed.

Then again let us not imagine that administration of public property by entrusting it to individuals or groups under the system of Socialism will be necessarily for very short terms. It is quite conceivable that a tenant may have the care and use of the land for, say, 10, 20 or 30 years, only it will not be his own. So we need not fear that land will deteriorate because of want of attention on account of the absence of private ownership.

Look at this jail. Look at the Superintendent bothering about keeping this block nice or that drain clean. He may be transferred at any time. It is because he has developed the sense of responsibility. Similarly everybody will develop a sense of responsibility whatever work is given to him. After all is said and done even if there are some defects and disadvantages in public ownership, we have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages as a whole; even if there be a few disadvantages we may have to choose the lesser evil. Therefore, if in public ownership there are disadvantages but if it will reduce inequality, put an end to injustice and starvation, if there will be no fraud, no deceit, no murder, no misappropriation, which arise out of private wealth—then it will be better to have the disadvantages of Socialism than private ownership and all its attendant evils.

There are two kinds of animals—some like tigers and cats which live each for itself. There are other animals like bees and ants which live in groups and the whole com-

has a natural tendency to work, and there is no room for dishonesty when what one wants can be got without dishonesty. He cannot amass private money to buy land because all land is with government. What is the use of stealing or amassing a lac of rupees? He can only be looking at the white silver. It will be only a burden. As we are unable to visualize true Socialism with all the new circumstances and motives that will surround it, we imagine all kinds of difficulties and disturbances. When we are able to perceive the whole, we will find automatic adjustment.

IV

Society at present is based on the system of private property. It has gone into the very marrow of our bones. It is more painful than a surgical operation without chloroform, to root out this property-idea. How shall we make this operation in the most painless manner and change the state of things?

The objects of Socialism may be sought to be attained by violence as they did in Russia. It may also be attained peacefully through propaganda and gradually. English socialists do not want violence. Russian socialists wanted violence but it is not the essential part of Socialism. It may be that we must seize the government in our hands before we can change the order of private property into Socialism. But that seizing of government may be peaceful or violent.

If the vast majority is really on your side it will not be necessary to use force. It is only powerful minorities that seek the aid of violence. What is essential is a conviction

among the people that the right state of things is an even distribution of work and wealth.

Private property has become a kind of superstition. Not only does the rich man believe in it, but the poor man is made to believe that he is a dependant upon the property of the rich and therefore he must support the rich man for his own living. To remove this superstition the Socialist has to do persistent and correct propaganda, based on truth and science. The difficulty in socialism is something like a land animal, like man, trying to understand the life of the fish. He thinks he may be in water for a bath or a swimming competition but he must come back to land to feel himself at home again. But once you become a fish you will have no difficulty in managing under water as we are managing on land now.

Some one wishes to know what is Mahatmaji's view. I think his views regarding property are those of a socialist, but he abhors violence as a means to that end.

Let me warn my friends who do not like the caste system—that they will find a renewal of the caste system under socialism. Much as we dislike it now, a new kind of caste system will be established. Let me give an example. In the Bolshevik state we want bicycles. There will be a group of people who will make them and who will naturally develop their skill in making it. It will not be open to every one to open a cycle manufactory. Even if I have the wealth and could buy it up, government would not allow me to buy up a factory. The bicycle makers will be an authorised class and group themselves into a trade union. The bicycle caste will be there, though it may not be called a bicycle caste. Similary continued occupation

of all kinds will create a kind of caste system. If we come again reborn after 100 years of Socialism we may find that the old hated demon of caste is again there in a new form, but it will be a demon without the fangs and with a good character. There will not be any difference of position or social rank, because all will be servants of the state and there will be no private property to create ineqality, rank, position, influence &c. If a bicycle man does not do his work properly or is lazy or inattentive he will be ex-communicated by the group and government will not hear his appeal. He has no training to become a cultivator. He has no property. He cannot go and buy a piece of land and become an idle landlord. He will be more miserable than a dismissed clerk of the Secretariat now. In a Socialist state every individual will have to cultivate a sense of responsibility and have only public benefit at heart. An ex-communicated man will be in a terrible state.

The whole plan of socialism is based on this axiom, namely, that the world is sufficient in itself and it is only inequality in distribution which makes us miserable. If the world is sufficient for all its inhabitants, then divide it equally amongst all. Socialism is a belief in the providence of God and in the sufficiency of the world. Let us try if the world is not sufficient for the peoples of the world. He who says that private property alone can go on and that nationalisation will not do has no faith in God, no faith in the sufficiency of the world. He thinks that the world is not enough for man and only a few people can be happy. That is Atheism.

A father says to his five sons, "This property which I leave you, my sons, is enough for you all." But the sons

say, "It is not enough. Only some of us can be happy, the rest are bound to be miserable. Let only the eldest inherit it." Is that right? Socialism is the extension of the Hindu joint family system to the whole world. But let us work for socialism without violence. Love is the most valuable of all our possessions and therefore let every moment of our life be devoted to its cultivation.

I have been explaining that in a Socialist state things need not be worked at once but may be attained gradually. At first some of our activities will be put aside for private concern and many others for public concern. Gradually more and more will be transferred from private concern to public concern. Many of the things which we now buy for money will then be available upon call from public servants, as we get water at the tap, or butter milk to quench thirst at fairs and festivals, or forms at the Post Office. Even now in certain villages a man can get shaved without paying any money to the village barber. Similarly the village dhoby's services could be availed of without paying money. In the socialist state the doctor will be available like that, the scavenger will be available like that and where it is convenient even cooked food will be available like that. Transport will be available like that. For instance the Railway train will run and anybody who has business can go in it, he need not pay for it. If you have a cart in a family any member of the family who has work can use it. So if in a socialist state enough trains run for all, why should any man pay for it? The man who has business can travel freely. In this way many things which are now got by the payment of money need not then be paid for.

The primary work of the state is the distribution of

food, and therefore no one need pay for his food supply. But remember always that everybody will have to work. You cannot be leading a lazy life and have all these conveniences. Everybody will have to contribute towards the common life.

Take a hive of bees. Every bee is fed properly. There is no salary paid for them. They all work and all are fed. Work will be a public duty and therefore will be honoured. Men will be put on such work as they are fit for. It is only when we pay money in different ratios, some work appears noble and some work ignoble, but in the socialist state all work will be noble, all work will be urgent and necessary. So everybody will be put to the work for which he is fit. A man who does very good medical work is now given a title by Government, but a scavenger who does good work is not even thought of. In the socialist state, titles and privileges will be given to everyone who does his work well. For instance, the scavenger will then be entitled to travel from here to Benares, take privelege leave if he likes, and enjoy good meals and theatres. People everywhere will be directed to give him assistance. So that, you see that the present classification of honour is not a permanent thing. It is only accidental. Time will come when the scavenger will be considered the most honourable man in the state as now the mother is considered in the household. Work which takes most attention and which has to be done in spite of troubles and inconveniences will be most honoured. There are certain things essentially difficult, essentially disagreeable such as scavenging, and people may not come forward to do it. I say, even in families there are certain disagreeable things

and the disagreeable thing is undertaken by the most self-sacrificing and honoured member in the household. In certain institutions and ashrams, even now, disagreeable things are taken up by self-sacrificing men and they are most honoured.

So even in a socialist State there will be self-sacrificing people ready to take up such work as nursing the sick, or washing dirty clothes who will get ten times the honour another man may get in another occupation. Even in the present state of things, take the very disagreeable work of going to war. People go to the front even at the risk of losing their lives, because they get honour for it. What is necessary and difficult will always be honoured. Many things which we now consider difficult and impossible will be possible in a socialist State because of improved knowledge, increased wealth and prosperity. Scavenging will not be difficult. Individuals will have to take more trouble in these matters and cannot expect members of a certain class or caste doomed to that work to come and do that work. Even the poor man will have a flush-out latrine. If you go to Europe and want to live frugally, you will have to go to a boarding house. There you will have to attend to the urine pot yourself when you go to sleep at night. It is not considered dishonourable; the best people do it. The socialist State will not condemn a caste to disagreeable work.

You may not wait even for a socialist State. In a few years' time there will be no scavenger even under the present system and you will have to do that work yourselves. I give you time only for ten years. You won't have a scavenger-caste after that time. You must therefore within

the next ten years train yourselves and teach your children how to do it properly. If you want I will show you how to do it. Otherwise when the time comes you will be put to a lot of inconvenience.

Once upon a time I could engage a cook for eight rupees per month. In a few years' time it came to Rs. 12, 15, 40 and I have paid Rs. 60 for a cook. Suppose you are poor; if you cannot cook and must depend on a professional, what will you do? And the scavenger will demand much more than a cook very soon. If I had my way I would even today ask the scavenger to demand at least Rs. 40 per month. "You are not bound to engage me but if you want my services you must pay me Rs. 40". The scavenger must be able to do the work and have a bath and change of clothes, drive in a carriage, and have a nice meal. In many civilised countries this is so even now.

Cooking was once considered menial work but today restaurant owners are considered very respectable, and you have seen some cooks change their clothes and come out in peacock fashion. Things really will change within the next ten years and you must be prepared for it. The first thing you should learn—I say this even at the cost of repetition and disagreeableness—is to keep receptacles for passing urine and execrements clean and neat, so that we ourselves may handle it. There is no difficulty about it provided you know that you have to deal with it, and not another man condemned to that work. Unless you learn this you can never understand how to nurse a sick person. Scavenging is the first step in Socialism because it is the most necessary service in life. Cleanliness in this is as important as eating. You cannot

conduct a State unless you look to this first. You cannot write to China for scavengers, when there is self-government in India and every one feels that he is an equal citizen with equal rights.

V

At the time of the War lies were circulated about German Science, and Russian Bolshevism. When Germany used Science in every way, her enemies circulated a story that Germany used corpses of men and animals for producing food, that they gathered dead bodies and distilled various juices and made use of them. This was done to create hatred against Germany, and to reduce her to submission. It is now known that it is all falsehood. Similarly to create hatred against Russian socialists, the enemies of Socialism circulated a story that they abolished marriage, and men and women lived promiscuously. Now it is known that this also was a myth. A lie once started has long life. Even if the clearest proof is given, these lies get life again and again.

Because I said that in a socialist State, land will be common, occupations will be national and everybody will become a public servant, one of you asked, "What about women?", as though women were property or occupation. Now, to look upon woman as property is a fundamental mistake, and therefore though property is nationalised it is a mistake to entertain the notion that women would be 'nationalised.' Women are free human agents with souls and thoughts like men, and just as man cannot be the slave of another man, woman cannot be the property of another woman or man. Therefore there is no question of Nationa-

lisation of women. As long as human nature is what it is, and as long as human little ones have to be looked after for long periods unlike the young ones of animals, so long are marriage and family life bound to continue. If you observe a cow calving you will find that the little calf is so much superior to a human child that it is able to stand and spring about on the very first day. That makes the difference.

Those who are condemned to a chaste married life imagine that there are pleasures in promiscuity just as you in jails imagine that sweet dishes are very nice; but if you take sweet dishes continuously for a time, you would wish to come back to your rice and sambar. In the same manner prostitutes and adulteresses wish to marry and live a steady, chaste family life. Family life is a permanent fixture in human nature. Coercion—coercion against the will of a wife is unnatural: that will go. But family life can be without coercion and is natural. Divorce will be easier than now; but as against divorce there is the counter-force of common children. It is not a matter of legal enactment but human nature that prevents and limits the number of divorces. Just as two friends live with great care and consideration towards each other because they have a right to part if they behave wrongly, the husband and wife will behave towards each other with caution and respect for feelings, and therefore their relations will improve and not degenerate by reason of possible separation. Under Socialism therefore parents will be public servants who will look after their children in the proper manner; and hence family life is bound to continue. If a father does not look after the child properly the socialist State will have authority to make

proper arrangements to bring up the child and punish the father for his neglect. To-day if I beat my little boy without knowing how to bring him up, the State cannot interfere. If I am dragged to the court, I can say, "This is my son, he is a minor boy. I can do whatever I like with him. I can beat him." In the Bolshevist State it won't be possible because I shall have to consider myself as only a guardian appointed by the nation. I shall have no rights against the child. So in the matter of wife as well as child the good things in family life will continue but bad things will not be permitted to continue.

If you go now into the villages you will find many a house a scene of battle between husband and wife, the husband drunk in the evening and beating the wife the whole morning. The State should have authority to protect wives against such husbands. At present we think if the wife is treated badly by the husband, it is her fate and God's will or her past sin, but in the Bolshevik State they will say, "That may be true, but let us try some remedy before that final consolation is availed of." After all man is imperfect and if we improve matters in some respects there may be new defects in certain other respects. We should judge by the balance of advantages.

In the Bolshevist state you will ordinarily be free to marry, but not everyone. Suppose a man is unfit to conduct family life, he will not be allowed to marry. A man who does not know how to conduct an engine cannot be appointed an engine driver. Engines are not so numerous as families ; we may select a few good engineers for the limited number of engines we have. But as

families are larger in number, second and third rate people will have to be allowed to marry. A man who suffers from an incurable disease will however not be permitted to marry. To-day the system of accumulated private property is the cause of incompetent people being permitted to marry. I am a leper, or an epileptic, but I have plenty of money, so an unfortunate girl is victimised. But when there is no property, who will marry a leper? Therefore even rules may be unnecessary, but rules will be there to prevent mishaps. Not only disease but mental disorders like bad temper, chronic fault-finding and tendency to beat will be considered as diseases. Such people will be as incompetent for married life as a man with leprosy, and divorce will be granted on proof of such things. But perhaps you are getting alarmed. Don't be afraid that on the slightest sign of anger your wife will run to Court and get an order for separation. If a wife occasionally quarrels, the husband loves her the more for it ; in the same way the wife will forgive her husband for petty quarrels.

As for early marriage and all that, it will depend on tradition and circumstances. If there be famine and devastation and the State is depopulated, naturally people will be encouraged to marry. Even polygamy and early marriages may be allowed, but it all depends upon circumstances. The object will only be to produce good men and women. So also the question of marriage will depend on occupation. A soldier going to war may not marry, so also a doctor whose whole time is taken up by his profession.

But there is no code now for all the details of Bolshevism. The system of management of property will be

changed and suitable codes according to convenience will be established. Our discussion now can only be a matter of guess work. The important question is, should property be unevenly distributed permanently, and should man inherit his father's property even though it is more than he wants or less, as at present, or should it be distributed more evenly for the good of all?

An enthusiastic Co-operator asks, Will not the Co-operative system be sufficient? No, just as charity, free gifts to the poor, will not be sufficient. Gifts, temporary or outright from the rich and the happy to the poor and the unhappy are not what is wanted. I give you my money for a low rate of interest and will help you with my capital, but you should be honest and pay back the whole amount. All of you together should stand responsible for the loan. These are temporary remedies and alleviations. The only final remedy is equal and proper distribution. The Co-operative movement is allopathic treatment for the disease of inequality. We want something more rational to remove the root-cause of the disease.

What about Arts and Sciences under Bolshevism? These will be certainly encouraged by the State. I want to have a beautiful picture in my home. I may have it for some days but if it is so beautiful that many want to see it, the picture will have to be put up in a gallery. I cannot lock it up in my drawer when I want, or expose it when I like, or put a fancy price on it. Science will be developed not for the increase of private property but for the benefit of all.

Will there be no money left with individuals? Yes. There may be some money left in the individuals' hands

for the supply of their everyday needs and things in which the State may not think it necessary to interfere.

Will there be any trade in the country as it is going on now? Today individuals trade with individuals but under Socialism the trade will be chiefly between nation and nation. Minimum necessaries of life will be assured to all. Our individual cares and anxieties will become less and less as we progress and when the system is worked things will become uniform.

If there is no property to be inherited who will make provision for the helpless child? In the Bolshevist State attempts will be made by the State to provide for the sick and unfit. It will be the work of the various local authorities and the State. I can write to the local authorities saying, my family is in such and such condition, that I would like to put my first son in engineering, the second in agriculture, the third in carpentry, and action would be taken on, that. In some things there will be less work and in some other things work will increase. There will be special State departments for the new activities taken up by the State. As the work of the State increases, the work of the individual grows less. But we should remember that the State under any conditions can only work through individuals, though as honored public servants, and consequently the joy and the variety and the enterprise of individual life will not be less.

I have talked about Bolshevism as if Socialism and Bolshevism were one and the same thing. Some however make out that the methods of violence and class-warfare essential parts of Bolshevism. You must take it that I

have talked only of the socialist State as achieved by education and peaceful reform and not by violence. To my mind violence really postpones the end in view.

STARS AND ATOMS

The stars that you see in the sky at night are all worlds like our own. Some of them are a million times larger than ours. Some dim patches that you see are whole clusters of worlds. This universe is, if you contemplate the distances, the size, and the motions, something awful. It is good to exercise your imagination in this kind of contemplation. It helps the development of humility and a due sense of proportion, and will strengthen you to bear grief and trouble and make joy out of the substance of sorrow.

I talk to you. The sound from my mouth travels on to your ears. It travels very fast, yet it takes some time. Have you watched a man washing his clothes in the river or tank at some distance from you? If you do, you will notice that between the man's movement that you see with your eyes and the sound that reaches your ears, there is a perceptible interval. That interval is the time taken by the sound to travel from there to your ears. Have you watched thunder and lightning? You see a flash. Then after a fairly long interval you hear the thunder. The sound was produced at the same time as the flash, but it took time to reach you. A very fast express train travels a mile a minute. Sound travels 12 miles per minute, twelve times faster than a fast train. Now you have an idea how quick Sound moves.

The lightning flash too took some time to travel from the spot where it was produced to your eyes. But light travels so fast that the time taken is negligible. It travels nearly a million times faster than sound. Big distances in the universe cannot be measured in miles. When you count very rich people's wealth you do not calculate in pies, or even in rupees, but in so many crores. So the distance between stars can be expressed in the number of *years* it takes for light to travel the distance! Think of it. Light takes but a second to travel a hundred times the whole length of India. It moves a million times faster than sound, which again moves 12 times as fast as the highest speed of trains. Light takes one day to traverse the distance that the earth makes round the sun in 38 years. You know the earth is a great distance away from the sun. About six times that distance, *i.e.*, 5400 lakhs of miles is the length of the path of the earth round the sun in one year. Thirty eight such years, *i.e.*, from the. time of your birth up till you are thirty-eight years of age: that length can be covered by light in the course of one day. But then from the nearest star to us, light takes three years to reach us. Have you realised from this something of the distance of the star? Some stars are so far that the light takes not three but a thousand years to reach us from there, and some are even farther off.

So that when you look at a dim star, you see not what there is there now, but what there was before Buddha was born. The light started then and has taken all the time up till today to reach your wondering eyes. And all the history of India has taken place in the interval. Exercise your imagination, think of the bright traveller rushing along twelve million times faster than our fastest train and

all the history of India happening before it completes its journey and reaches your eyes today.

This little world of ours, and our little lives in it, what insignificant things they are, then. Imagine rats caught in a trap, but enjoying themselves inside over the bits of onions there, some fighting, some playing, some very sad, some very jolly, as if the trap were the whole world, that is something like this world in the big universe.

The universe around is so vast. But there is another immeasurable vastness inside us and inside every material particle, that is no less big and awful than the vastness of space around. A particle of matter is a universe in itself, if we could see the molecules and atoms and the electrons moving round each other as fast as light and in perfect order like the planets and the sun and the stars. The velocities inside the particle are as great as the velocities of the celestial spheres outside. The atomic world is no less complicated than the outer universe. And this universe, so vast outside and so vast inside, is all the manifestation of a single universal Energy or Spirit, to which our ancestors addressed the Gayatri. "I offer my salutation to the Light that continually creates, sustains, moves and destroys these worlds immeasurable. May it permeate and purify me!"

You think you are sitting around me on the safe and solid earth. But do you know that we are really moving in dizzy circles at a rate that will stagger your imagination. The earth to which we stick, goes round itself at a pace which is as many times faster than an Express train, as that train is faster than a pedestrian. Not only does it spin round itself with all of us at that rate, but it is at the

same time moving on in its path round the sun about 600 times faster than our fastest train. And when we are carried along at this dizzy pace in this double motion, we talk, we play, we love, we carry on battles, struggles, wars, we think, we dream, we pray. Is there anything more amusing than this! What is most amusing of all is that while we are spinning round and rushing so dangerously fast, we should hate, be jealous, plot and intrigue and plan revenges, and think we shall be very happy if we make others unhappy.

OCTOBER SECOND

Our Mahatma is entering on his sixty-second year today. He was born in 1869. Let us not forget that whilst he is entering on his 62nd year and we are celebrating his birthday, he is in prison. He is recognised as one of the greatest men of the world. We have allowed him to be in prison today. We are all responsible for keeping him in prison, because the only way to release him is to get Swaraj and we have not laboured enough for it. Previously he was put in prison for definite periods, but today he is put in prison as a danger to Government and indefinitely. We are in prison and for the time being we are civilly dead. But for those outside the issue is whether Mahatma is a danger to Government and therefore should be kept in prison and the Government maintained, or the Government in its present form is a danger to the country and the people should put an end to it. The issue is whether Gandhiji should be

released from Government, or the Government from Gandhiji. Even as he has been put in prison without any definite period of imprisonment, the people should fix their programme without any period and go on until the goal is achieved. There is no doubt that India must get freedom but it would be good to hurry up so that she may have it while Mahatmaji is still alive.

Whether we are going to get Swaraj is not a matter for doubt, even Government knows that full well. We shall surely be free somehow ; but if we follow Mahatmaji's plan in getting Swaraj we shall be able to conduct Swaraj properly without chaos. If we do not follow his path, it is true we shall get Swaraj later on but we will have to go through a lot of anarchy in the interval.

He wants us to carry out, while we are fighting with the Government, many schemes of reform of our society, economic as well as social, in order that we may have real happiness along with Swaraj. Otherwise we will have self-government but we will not have what he calls Swaraj.

Many of our people find fault with the tendency of Hinduism to reduce every thing to god-worship. Even in our own life-time we have begun to make mere ceremonial worship of the Mahatma's doctrines. People who do not know how to spin at all compose verses about Khaddar and the Charkha. While this kind of ceremonial has begun during our own lifetime, we may imagine what is going to happen after our lifetime. We should therefore attempt to adhere to truth and strict reason from the beginning. What is it that Mahatmaji has told us ? Let us try to do it. What he has told us is easy to understand. He has

shown us the way to attain Swaraj and we must follow in that way.

Now I think I shall tell you something about myself. When I began as a young politician I thought, and all the intelligent people in India had till then thought, that there was no way to get real freedom except by armed revolution. But we also knew that the art of warfare had run so much in advance of us that it was a hopeless task to overtake it. We were all living in despair on account of this feeling that it was a hopeless task to attempt warfare. Then the bomb was brought into India. It was not real fighting or warfare, but a method of frightening or terrorising. By secret organisation and the manufacture of bombs and killing ten, twenty or thirty people and terrorising the Government people hoped to drive the foreigners away. People soon found however that the death of one or two white men did not matter. Even if 20 or 30 people were killed there were more people to take their places, fresh, determined and perhaps worse people. Again despair seized the people.

One day I found a small book in a waste-paper-basket in a friend's house. It was Thoreau's book on Civil Disobedience and I found that small booklet very interesting and my eyes were opened. At the same time Mahatmaji's work in South Africa used to appear in the papers. Now Mahatmaji discovered the application of Thoreau's and Tolstoy's doctrines to Indian politics. He discovered the truth that a foreign people cannot govern us unless we cared to be so governed. Once we withdrew our consent, the Government must break down. When we read about the struggle in South Africa we realised that we had a weapon which we could wield very successfully in India.

Once I attended a conference at Kurnool. At that time a large number of deportees had come from S. Africa. They were sent here—a great hardship for these people—where they had no homes nor any means of livelihood. They were being taken throughout India to enlist sympathy for the South African struggle. I talked with one of them at Kurnool and he spoke to me about a book which Mahatmaji had written and of his peculiar ideas and ways, and how that book was proscribed in South Africa. He sent me that little book. I read it with very great avidity. The book is now re-published and is available everywhere. That book was shown by Mahatmaji to Gokhale. Gokhale read it and when Mahatma asked what he thought of it, it seems he said, (So Mahatmaji told me), "It should be thrown into the Arabian sea". Gokhale had gone to South Africa to help Mahatmaji, in fact Mahatmaji adored Gokhale like a Guru. Gokhale said, "It is a genuine book but of no use in modern times"; the reason being that Gokhale stood for modern civilisation and progress, mills, machinery and all that; whereas that book cried halt to modern civilisation and urged people to go back to the simple life.

At the time when Mahatmaji published his Hind Swaraj, and conducted his campaign in South Africa, though he absolutely based his programme on non-violence, and non-violence alone, the Indian revolutionaries who were bomb-throwers and conspirators felt, that it was only make-believe, and that Gandhiji would come into their fold later on. The Indian revolutionary party which was then working fairly vigorously in Europe, America and India, was always looking upon Gandhiji as one of their own, and looked forward to his join-

ing them and even leading them. The reason was this—Gandhiji's method of thinking and of action was marked by fearlessness and did not exhibit the halting character or timidity of moderate politics. He struck at the root of things. He did not recognise the English as superior and he pleaded for fundamental fearless changes, and the revolutionary party said to themselves, "This is the man we want." Whereas Moderates condemned the revolutionaries as enemies of the country, Mahatmaji was always appreciating their patriotism and courage and so they thought, "Here is a man who appreciates, finally he will join us."

A small incident will tell you how this expectation was nursed. In 1912 X came to India. He came to Salem with a friend of his. He was then quite a young man and had no practice and I met him. X had the acquaintance of some of the Indian revolutionaries of that time in London, and we had a conversation. We talked about politics and the chances of the revolutionaries. Somebody said, "There is no chance hereafter.. They have all been crushed." Then X said, "No, wait till Gandhiji comes to India." I cannot say that I did not also think so. I also did not then feel quite convinced that the use of violence was wrong. I too thought that perhaps Gandhiji could be induced to join the revolutionaries.

Then I read his jail experiences in S. Africa which was published in the Modern Review. He had gone thrice to jail in South Africa and it was a very interesting record. Many politicians had not read it at that time but I was fascinated by it; so much so, I afterwards reprinted it at

my own cost. But those experiences made it perfectly clear that there was no hope of catching Mahatmaji into the movement of violence.

All shades of politicians praised Gandhiji for his work in South Africa and appreciated his success but they all had reservations that those methods had no use in India. A missionary in South Africa by name Doke had written a biography of him and a missionary in Salem with South African connection lent that book to me. It was a very interesting book and revealed for me completely Mahatmaji's mind. After that, there was no more doubt in my mind. I understood him exactly as I know him now. Finally the revolutionaries too discovered that Gandhiji was an opponent and was never going to join them or be their leader. Then Politics took three different lines, one form of extremism viz., Gandhism, another form of extremism viz., revolutionarism, and a third school of nationalism viz., that of moderates.

When Gandhiji came to India in 1913 he led the Kaira and Champaran campaigns and made it clear to the people of India that his methods could be applied to India also He had made Non-Violence an actual positive weapon. At that time Mrs. Besant took a leading part in Indian Politics. She did not then care much for Gandhiji. She also thought that Gandhiji's methods were violent. At the time of a University Convocation at Benares once, Mr. Gandhi was speaking about the bomb-throwing cult and was explaining how the bomb-thrower was also a good man, loved his country and was prepared to sacrifice even his life. What was wrong with it? He intended to show the bomb-thrower's error after appreciating his motives.

But Mrs. Besant on hearing the appreciation got so excited that she stood up and left the meeting followed by a number of Maharajahs who were also there. After that for a long time there was a coolness between Mrs. Besant and Gandhiji. At that time Gandhiji in his speech also referred to the diamonds and jewels worn by the Maharajas and spoke very strongly about the poverty of the people. While the country was full of half-starved people, he said, they were wearing jewels like vain women. This and the reference to the bomb cult led impatient Mrs. Besant to leave the meeting with the Maharajas. But Gandhiji's work in South Africa was so good that a Governor of Madras (Lord Ampthill) publicly referred to it in terms of profound appreciation, and a Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal was later on given to the Mahatma. During the Non-Co-operation movement he returned this medal.

As you know, a boycott was organised against the receptions to the Prince of Wales in 1922. Mahatmaji and I were once discussing about the principle of sacrifice in Satyagraha methods. Then I asked, "What was the sacrifice involved in the boycott of the Prince of Wales? There was no sacrifice involved in it, it was merely a political manoeuvre." He replied very feelingly, "You do not understand the pain I suffered in not meeting the Prince of Wales. My discourtesy caused me so much pain. It was a great sacrifice." This shows the true nature and attitude of Mahatmaji. He is a prince among courtiers. He is full of love. He has absolutely no colour prejudice. Even now when he writes a harsh thing about an Englishman he feels for it as when you have to say something painful about your own brother or other near relative.

Mahatmaji's greatest desire is the abolition of un-touchability. He considers it most important. If we who follow him feel that we cannot agree with him on this point, it is no use trying to work with him. He has had many difficulties in this matter. He has had to quarrel with his own wife. His wife too agrees that Untouchability should be ended, but sometimes she does not go as far as Mahatmaji wants her to go. At any rate the husband thinks that his wife is not proceeding as far as he does. It may be, as I have often thought, he misjudges her. About 1915 he came to South India and took a panchama boy, son of an old South African co-worker of his and he made Mrs. Gandhi wash that boy and do the necessary ablutions for him. You know what those ablutions are. She did all this quite cheerfully. He was taking the boy with him in the railway carriage. This boy did not know how to look after himself. He spoiled the seat. At once Mrs. Gandhi took the boy and washed him and also cleaned the seat. Don't imagine she did not cooperate with him. But occasionally there were difficulties, and husbands do not realise wives' difficulties. The boy, incidentally I may tell you, ran away sometime later. But there is a panchama girl of Gujerat whom Mahatmaji brought up as a member of his own family. That girl it appears was very mischievous, and her parents have been the cause of troubles, and very often Mahatmaji had to take a few vows on account of her.

Untouchability, as Mahatmaji understands it to be, is not a disease of the 'untouchables' but a disease of the Touchables. He considers that the disease is among the so-called higher castes and the remedy also must be applied

to them There is nothing on the other person that is untouchable, only you are suffering from superstition. It is only a kind of fear, a neurasthenic condition that if you touch the man something will happen to you. You must get rid of that fear. So it would not be difficult to remove untouchability if we set our minds upon educating the people. Some people think that if we could make Musalmans or Christians of all the untouchables their difficulties would be solved. They think that the untouchable suffers so much now, that there is no hope of reforming Hinduism. We will see the uselessness of such a remedy if we see the difficulties of the Hindus and Muslims in the north. Our object must be to do good and bring peace to the whole country. *What we should do really is to educate the so-called upper classes to see that there is nothing untouchable in the other man, but that there is only a fear in their own minds, which can be and should be removed.*

CASTE

There are many kinds of trees and many kinds of beasts. They are all different from each other. Similarly there are customs and social practices of various nations. They are all different and if they are defective they may be improved, yet bad as they are we may make the best use of them. There are advantages and disadvantages in every kind of social law and custom just as there are advantages in the bird's wings or a man's hands and fingers or a horse's tail, or a cow's horns. We may imagine that we may exchange our hands for a pair of wings, or horns or for a nice tail, but

we may be committing a mistake after all. Don't misunderstand me. I know that there is a difference between the illustrations I have given and customs. A bird cannot grow hands, a man cannot grow wings but we can change our customs and manners. No doubt man's customs may change and can be changed unlike the bodies of birds and beasts but so long as they are not changed we should recognize that they have advantages as well as disadvantages. We need not fill ourselves with grief because we are not what we are not. We can make the best of the existing customs that we have, even while we seek to change them.

For instance, the Western people are very fond of using violence, but we are inclined to practise Ahimsa. We can make the best of this as they will make the best of that. Let us remember always that all varieties are only varieties and do not make superiority or inferiority. We need not bother about differences provided they do not create a feeling of superiority or inferiority.

I shall express my views in this matter. Do not take it that I claim it to be the right view for all people or that it is the view held by Mahatmaji. I am sure of only this, that Mahatmaji will tolerate such opinions. There is an erroneous notion prevalent that in the present movement all departments of life are governed by Mahatmaji's views. I remember once when I was touring somewhere a good man offered me food. I said I did not want it. He pressed me very much to take it though I was feeling no hunger. Then he said, "I have got goat's milk, take it." I asked why I should take goat's milk. He said "Mahatmaji takes goat's milk." Similarly there are many people throughout the country who want to do in everything what

Mahatmaji thinks right. It shows the influence that he has over our people, something like what we read about Krishna and the Gopis.

I do not think that we can any longer keep to the hereditary rule of occupations. It is impossible to make the son follow always the profession of his father and it is not good for our people either. It is no doubt true that whatsoover occupation needs training from the earliest childhood will be handed down from the family to the children but it will not be as a rule of religion or caste. It may be that there were advantages in such an arrangement in former times but it is not possible to maintain it nowadays.

Then there is the question of Eating. I am of opinion that it is not proper to imagine that one man cannot dine with another person. It is neither possible nor useful to maintain such a distinction. I can eat whatever is cooked or touched by anybody. I can eat alongside of anybody and in the presence of anybody. Many of you might think that this interferes with the rules of cleanliness and sanitation. The rules of cleanliness are totally different from the exclusion of particular groups of people according to caste or blood-relationship. I cannot say that a particular man will always be unclean or his relations will always be unclean. It is wrong. If we exclude some people for all time from decent company they are likely to become more and more dirty. Now there are these sweepers here. If you allow them to touch and mix with you there is hope of improvement in their manners and habits, but if you always exclude them there is no hope of it. So it becomes a duty to mix with people who are not comparatively as clean as we are.

There are two ways of reformation according to human reason. One is by segregating bad people—this is the jail method. The other is mixing with the bad or defective people, which is the basis of the educational method. I think that the method of segregation was tried in the caste system. It is no longer of any use. We will have to try the other method of mixing up. In this connection another argument advanced is that we should not mix with the untouchables because they eat flesh. This too is meaningless. Only if you have a large heart towards those people, can you reclaim them. Supposing you want to teach a boy to run. You do not run away in front of him. You try to run slower and keep pace with the boy so that you can teach him. It is not the path of love to go forward leaving behind you those whose customs are, in your opinion, wrong or unclean. The idea that you can be at a great distance and yet influence others to come up to you is not found in true experience. I consider it our duty to mix with people who do not know how to be clean. They will improve rapidly by mixing up. No doubt there will be some reaction, some harm done to those leading a higher standard of life; but that is the necessary cost of any national improvement. Therefore I do not think there is any objection to inter-dining,in the full sense of the word social, intercourse. Why should there be any difference in eating on account of profession? To say that a schoolmaster should not dine with a doctor is not more absurd than to say that a brahmin should not dine with a barber. The brahmin is the schoolmaster and the barber is the doctor. But one prohibition is in vogue and the other is not, and so it looks all right though the other sounds absurd. The doctor touches more

poisonous dirt than the barber does in his work and yet nobody objects to his own relations being doctors or to dine with them. If my brother can be a doctor why cannot my brother be a barber? The barber may refuse to touch certain parts of the body but the doctor cannot, and if we can swallow the doctor let us not strain at the barber. It seems to me nothing but the force of habit that keeps us away. May be that the money which the doctor gets is a purifying agent! Perhaps if we pay the barber also more liberally, we may have no objection to admit him to society.

My confirmed belief is that women as well as men should be free to marry whomsoever they like. Don't be startled. I am not proposing that boys and girls may run away with each other. I only say that in marriages, instead of the choice of old people the choice of the young people should prevail. Even if the parent should exercise the choice, he should have a free choice and not one limited by caste. I consider that marriage is only a form of partnership or friendship. We can be partners without distinction of caste, friends without distinctions of caste, and I consider that marriage too need not be bound down by rules of caste. It is impossible hereafter to maintain these rules. We must bow to progress and make marriage free. When I say I must be free to eat anything that I like, it does not mean that I should go and eat what is not fit for eating. Freedom does not mean that we permit wrong. It means this, we permit men and women to do what they honestly consider to be good.

Marriage is an important thing. It is a matter affecting one's whole life. The deepest considerations as to mutual happiness must govern a marriage but there should

be freedom. That is all I say. So far as the vast majority among the masses are concerned, early occupational training is necessary for the children. So the mother will have to be of the same profession as the father. You can see this well if you observe a family of weavers or carpenters. But this does not mean that there shall be no freedom among them. We need not expect a revolution. People will continue to marry among people who follow the same profession and are of the same rank. All I claim is that there should be liberty for exceptions to be made.

How shall we bring about this freedom? I have been here amongst you for more than 4 months and if I have exercised any influence over you, this is my particular request; that in the service that you wish to do, whatever it may be, do not swerve from the path of Love. Do not follow the path of strife and hatred. Be clear in your minds as to which is the right thing to do, namely such and such a reform. Be clear also about this: "The worst thing I can do is to hate my brother". Whatever the value of a reform may be, I want you to avoid violence and compulsion and only depend upon persuasion. We must change, but we should change without inflicting a greater harm than what is already suffered. It is want of faith in human nature to imagine that only compulsion and destructive methods can bring about change. It is only when you are weak and defeated that you think of force. Even when you are indulging in something which is absolutely bad for you, have I not preferred the method of persuasion to force? For example, I do not want you to prevent anybody from smoking by the use of force. I want you to convince him that it is bad. It is not different in regard

to our social customs. If children will not do their lessons, there is no use in employing force. It must only be dealt with by love. If you care for my opinions, I wish you to remember that all social reform should be achieved through love and not by the pressure of hatred.

There is at present a pressure of concentrated hatred upon a particular people, the brahmins, which I deplore, and I belong to that hated class. It does not seem to me the right method at all to hate any particular community. I have to reduce the force of my expressions because I belong to that caste. I say this thing to you here. I would not say it outside. I know it is no good; people must be left to learn from their own experience. But I want you with whom I have moved so closely and whom I expect to be my co-workers, to avoid all hatred and pursue the method of love in social reform. The amount of distrust, ill-will and hostility prevailing in this matter is enormous, and I want you not to become a prey to that evil.

You have moved with me all the twelve hours of the day for so long. If you believe me, and have come to know me well I want you to develop mutual trust and avoid the danger I am pointing out to you. Suppose a man is orthodox and does not wish to eat with you. There is no use in worrying him and making him eat with you, by fraud, deception, or force. You must allow your own conduct silently to influence his conduct. Let your own life speak for you. We will only be following the fatal method said to be followed by Mussalmans in conversion and universally condemned, if we follow this method of reform in our country. The Christians and Mussalmans regret the error of compulsion and they do not follow it to-

day. The whole world has understood that there is no use for compulsion in regard to change of manners. Suppose a man has different opinions, all wrong He does not believe in the unification of caste or freedom of marriage. I may think he is a fool but I need not hate him for that. Otherwise you will create a new caste called "Social reformers". The moment you use the methods of hatred and force you will only be helping to create another caste and you will not achieve your purpose.

Suppose you have flour and want to dissolve it in hot water. If you pour hot water over it straight away the flour becomes all clotted. But if you mix it in cold water first and pour hot water on to it slowly it dissolves well. Change is possible only by the method of persuasion and not by force. It is a general truth which applies to hot water and flour, and also to human minds.

Do not imagine that the method of love is a slow method and that hatred is a quick method. The method of persuasion and love is the only method. The method of hatred and compulsion is a failure. It is the way of love that is quickest in fact. I agree in so many matters with those who want social reform, but I have also pointed out where I differ.

NATIONAL DEBT

You wish to know about our Public Debt. Here in prison, I am not able to give you any figures, I will only tell you the general history of it. You know what a national debt is. Government every year spends money

for the people and meets that expenditure by asking the many to pay each something towards it. These payments are called Taxes. The budget of Revenue and Expenditure is discussed every year. What is new is discussed, what is old and well settled is not discussed ; but on the whole every year the amount of expenditure is determined and how that money is to be raised is also settled, how much each is to pay and what kind of man has to pay. This is how government is carried on. The settlement of Taxation and Expenditure is the chief duty of Government. If this is not done every year, if the expenses are not properly estimated, and if the minister in charge is unable to carry through proposals for taxation and expenditure, if he fails to convince the representatives of the people of the utility of the expenditure and the tolerableness of the taxes, everything will come to a standstill. Therefore even if we get swaraj the first important thing is to get capable ministers to frame and push through the budget.

It is proper that people should pay the expenses incurred during the year in the shape of taxes. Supposing a big expenditure is to be incurred in order to build an anicut which will produce benefit for a thousand years, it will be difficult to make the people pay in that single year the whole of that expenditure. Statesmen have invented a method of meeting this difficulty. Realising that it would not be proper or possible to raise by taxation during a single year money for big expenditure of this kind, they say to the people, "We will take money as loan from you we will treat it as your own money, and pay you interest on it every year until the loan is repaid. We will raise annual taxes to pay you the interest. We will spend the

sum raised by loan to build the anicut or the Railway. This is called productive National Debt. So also to defend the country from foreign aggression—a matter in which posterity is interested—they do not spend out of the year's revenue. They raise loans, on interest, and spread the expenditure over a number of years and thereby they are enabled to spend huge sums of money in order to repel foreign invasion, which benefits not only those then living but also future generations.

One reason why our ancestors failed to defend the country properly was because they did not know this method of meeting big expenditure but tried to rob the people by heavy taxation all at once, for wars. They failed because people naturally grew discontented. Supposing the Mahrattas had raised money by loans and kept off foreign aggressors and had established Swaraj in India, would we not have gladly paid interest on that loan?

Now I have told you about proper national debts. The original share amount with which the East India Company was started was valued at a premium and converted into a national debt at the time of the transfer to the Crown. It is proper that the amount spent in defending a country against foreign aggression should be treated as a national debt; but today we pay the cost of foreign aggression and the expenditure incurred by the East India Company in its wars, for its conspiracies and its intrigues. All the moneys which they spent to extend their dominions in and around India are part of the present national debt. The money for instance which they spent for the purchase of the Diwani of Bengal is part of our national debt, we pay interest on the loan with which Clive bought the Diwani.

It is not only with our own men that they took possession of the whole of India but with our own money. For the boots, the clothing, the food, the beer and the whisky spent by soldiers we have fully paid and we are still paying. Except the brains of the Englishmen who worked it out, and the lives of those Englishmen who died in the business, all the rest is our own.

If a robber comes and takes a man's property it is usual for the robber to pay his own expenses. But we have besides giving up our own country worked hard and saved money and paid off all the expense of this transfer. All the expense incurred by the Company in their wars carried on in Afghanistan, Egypt, Burma, China, Persia and everywhere in the East has been also imposed on India. Then they carried on wars in Europe. We paid a handsome contribution for it by borrowing and are paying interest for it. That too is part of our national debt. All these have come to an enormous amount. But the accounts have been so written up that unjust impositions are shown as already discharged and only productive debts are shown as still due. They have discharged out of the loans and surpluses all the wrongly imposed debts and have tried as far as possible to retain as debt only such items against which the charge that they are unproductive or unjust cannot be made; so that it may be difficult to repudiate these debts just as what some guardians of the estates of minors and women do. All the people who own Government paper are people who have lent money for the national debt. They are naturally on the side of the Government, for a change of Government, they fear, may mean that these loans may be repudiated. It is like the fish getting a vested interest

in the net in which they are caught. All those people who have put their money in Government promissory notes are people who have taken over directly or from others these loans. All of them are in terrible fear lest these loans may be repudiated. They oppose therefore any radical change.

If we settle matters, some independent tribunal should sit and examine how much has unjustly been put on India and how much should now be put upon England. We are entitled to place upon England's shoulders a certain amount of our national debt. There is no question of repudiation. The good people who have given won't suffer only, instead of getting interest from the Indian peasant, they will have to get it from the English people. There need be no fear in the minds of those who have lent money, so long as England is not bankrupt.

SOCIAL REFORM

Social Reform is good and necessary; but in working for it, we should avoid all hatred and anger. Your concern should only be for reform. You should have no personal pride in the matter. The world is progressing, civilisation is progressing; neither you nor I should exaggerate our own part in it. Every one should be free to work for reform in his own way. One should not interfere with the methods employed by another. It is good that each should act according to his own genius and instincts in this matter. The one general rule is whatever may be your methods let it be prompted by and accompanied with good will.

We should not quarrel with each other about what is more important or less important. When the rain falls all kinds of beautiful plants get life. When there is new life in the nation, all kinds of activities are seen. We need not quarrel with each other over what should be done first and what might wait. Let every one do what he feels interested in. We may not go and interfere with Tagore because he writes poems when India is struggling for freedom. We should not quarrel with Raman because instead of assisting in removing untouchability he is making researches in the diffusion of atomic energy. All kinds of activities may and should go on, just as the rain falls and the sun shines. Leave every man to do what his genius dictates.

There is a pride in every man which makes him think that the work he has taken up is most important. You may have your own pride, but do not interfere with other peoples' pride. When the train is moving, every part of it is vibrating. It is not for the wheel to tell all parts, " Do not shake now. I am the only part carrying the train."

Another thing I want to warn you about is this : Find fault with things, but do not attack men. Point out errors, but do not utter abuse against men and women. Men are created by God or are born according to previous Karma, or they are made according to environments. Let us be charitable. It is only if we remember this, and have consideration for men and women and attack only errors, that we can succeed. If we take pleasure in attacking the men we only create opposition and difficulties. In some matters it may be a very fine distinction, but in most matters if you keep Reform in your mind and forget persons, our work will proceed very quickly.

It is not necessary if a man abuses me that I should also abuse him in turn. If other people are impatient, let us not imagine it is our duty to find fault with their impatience. Let us make the best of the patience that we have, even though others may not have it. If any man loses his patience, do not get worried. Apply the universal remedy of Love. It has magic effect.

Some people wish to abolish Religion itself. It is time to do away with a religion when it becomes altogether useless and false, just as the snake throws off its slough. But we may not throw off Religion itself. The skin is not the life but it is necessary for life. I fancy that if we remove Religion in India, India will die. We shall not be able to rebuild India this way. People quarrel over religions and we should stop it. But it does not follow that we should do away with Religion itself. If some people dispute and differ over social reform do you think we had better drop social reform itself?

Do not get morbid. You must keep a sense of proportion, and a sense of humour, and re-inforce your humility from time to time. Otherwise you will get melancholy, self-righteous and useless for work.

Another thing I want to tell you is this. We may even attack the present generation of men; but do not talk ill of our ancestors. That will give rise to great quarrels and animosities, and it is very unjust. We have some data to attack living people, but we have not enough data at all to prosecute dead people. Therefore please let go those who are dead and who cannot defend themselves. Our ancestors discerned truths which even now modern western people are struggling to discover. They were great men. Our

greatest asset is our great past. I am proud of the fact that the decimal system, the basis of modern Arithmetic was discovered in India. I am proud of the fact that we may trace the origin of modern science to India. Our ancestors were not crooks and humbugs. They served the cause of truth and were great in their work.

We want to abolish caste distinctions. We want to unite all India into one people. Let us do so. But let us not imagine that Caste was invented by rogues. It came into existence because it was then found useful. It was firmly established because it was necessary for the people then. Let us not find fault with our ancestors because we do not want the institution now. Take a dry log of wood ready to be used as timber. The bark is useless and has to be mercilessly chopped off. But shall we say, the bark should never have been there in the tree? The bark was necessary for the life of the tree which took long years to grow. It was an integral part of the tree itself. If we do not want it now, let us chop it off but let us not ignorantly abuse the gardener for allowing the tree to grow a useless bark. The Caste system was probably necessary or useful for those days and preserved the tree of society, but today it may be mere bark and encumbrance, so we may chop it off. But we may not besmirch the fair name of our dead ancestors. If nothing else, it creates enmity and therefore we should not do it. It does not help us in our work at all.

If you follow right lines of action you are bound to succeed; but do not go away with the impression even if you do not succeed, that you should stop all work. Young people should never despair.

We are struggling like drowning men in water. Let us not fight with each other when our chief aim is to get to the shore. If we cannot find strength or success, we should pray to God, and not try to console ourselves by finding fault with other people. We must not imagine that fault-finding is work. If you take a daily newspaper you will find that the editor is ever trying to find fault with other people. He never finds any fault in himself. Even so politicians. We extremists do not try to find our defects but indulge in abusing the Moderates, and the Moderates too are engaged in the same game. You must avoid falling into this trap. So whatever work you take on hand do what you can. Do not try to throw the blame on other people.

PERIODS IN INDIAN HISTORY

We think too much of the period of British or Mussalman domination, but pass over much longer periods in earlier history without realising their length. In the Ramayana and the Mahabharata we read things described so as to indicate that at the time of the composition of these books if not much earlier, our people had reached a very high degree of civilisation including ordered government, fine arts, trade, industry and learning. Indeed it is doubtful whether in essential respects we are today much in advance of the state reached by us even in those days. Now this was at least 5000 years ago. The whole period of ordered British domination in India from Lord Hasting's time to Non-cooperation days is only about 100 years. The proportion is something like a minute to an

hour. British rule in India is just a minute in the hour of our civilisation.

Take Goutama Buddha whose time is taken by historians as about 2500 years ago. If you consider the setting, the circumstances of his renunciation, his teachings, his work among princes and people, and the work of his immediate successors, you can visualise something of the law and order, arts, civilisation, learning and philosophy that must have been developed and established before him. Now, arts, civilisation, learning, law and order cannot be established in a day among any people. It must have been the cumulative result of human energy running over ages. You can imagine how many years of progress must have preceded Buddha to make Buddha and his teachings possible.

Twenty three centuries ago, the grandfather of Asoka, drove the Greek invaders back, brought India under his sway and ruled from a capital city, the municipal administration of which is described by a contemporary Greek traveller in glowing terms of admiration. Reading Megasthenes's book is like reading a modern municipal report.

Asoka lived and ruled in our country 2100 years ago, easily the greatest and the most civilised monarch of all times. A king like that was a phenomenon possible only in a society permeated by the highest degree of civilisation and philosophy. "No man should speak evil of the religion of others," Asoka commanded. The offence as well as the prohibition both denote the high stage of civilisation that we must have reached then.

From the time of Valmiki's Ramayana up to the advent of the Mussalmans is a long period of 4000 years of a high

degree of civilisation which could have been possible only under ordered government. Therefore, whatever the occasional disturbances might be, the intervals of peace and order must have been great and such as to allow the growth of arts and learning, philosophy and Dharma. This period of Hindu Swaraj prior to the Mussalman advent covers a length of time forty times bigger than the period of ordered British rule in India. How much quicker is a non-stop Express Train than your grand mother tottering along with a stick? That gives you an idea of forty times.

So after all we have not been very long under British rule. Some people imagine that we have been so long under it, that it has become a second nature. How absurd it is to think so is seen when you take the facts and compare.

Britain was under Roman occupation once. For how long do you think? 400 years; more than twice the time from Clive to Gandhi! Mussalmans ruled in India altogether for three times the length of time from Warren Hastings up to our days. It is for many reasons useful to ponder over this fact.

Mussalman rule over India may be divided into two parts, the one before Baber, and the other the Moghul rule. The Pre-Baber Mussalman Emperors of India held sway for 300 years, *i.e.*, twice the whole period from Clive up to 1920. The Moghuls ruled India for 180 years which is just as long as we have had anything to do with English people.

The British occupation of India appears to us so long because we are living in that period, just as the trees seem taller than a temple tower and hide it when you are among the trees. It is interesting to ponder over the fact that we have been under Britain only just as long as we were under

Baber and his five illustrious successors. People living in the days of Aurangazeb must have felt about Moghul rule in regard to its age, permanency and providential character, just as people felt about the British connection in Gokhale's time.

The Mahrattas acquired and held undoubted and supreme sway over India from Baji Rao's time for a hundred years until British domination was established, not a small period by any means, when we remember that from the time when Lord Hastings left British rule paramount in India up to Non-cooperation days, it is just 100 years. The Mahrattas were not mere robber bands as most of us were taught to believe at school, but conducted ordered government including details of Land Survey and Revenue Settlement.

Take the two great and well known Hindu Emperors, Chandragupta and Vikramaditya. They were neither the beginning nor the end of Indian civilisation. Yet from one to the other is a period of 800 years, more than four times the whole length of the British period in Indian history. After Vikramaditya we had kings and dynasties ruling for another 800 years before Muhammad Ghori took possession of Delhi.

Talking of civilisation in India, a noteworthy fact is the tradition of religious toleration from time immemorial. Persecution for religious belief ceased in Britain only in the 19th century. Akbar in the 16th Century declared equality of rights, equality of laws and religious freedom for all. Historians record that Akbar found truth in every religion, and in his palace worshipped God not only according to Islamic form but sometimes as the Hindus did, some-

times like the Parsis, and sometimes like the Christians. He tried to unite Islam and Hinduism in a system of his own, but forced it on no one. He adopted rules of government in matters of religion which were followed in England or Europe only after three hundred more years of civilisation. The freedom to worship God as one pleases, which he laid down as the law of the land was unknown in Europe then and long afterwards. This freedom of faith was no new thing, but a part of Indian tradition and civilisation from time immemorial, and no liberal Emperor in India to whatever race he belonged could escape that idea. While Akbar was honouring and listening to expositions of protagonists of various religions in his Court, Archbishops and Bishops were being burnt alive in Oxford under ordered government.

UNTOUCHABILITY

You want me to tell you some personal reminiscences on this subject. Less than 20 years ago there were two Panchama employees in the Municipality of Salem. Their work was to open and close the stop-cocks for the water taps in certain quarters. The engineer of the Municipality transferred these two men in the ordinary course to the Agraharam ward. I was the chairman of the Municipality, but I did not happen to know this when it happened; —not that if I had known it, I would have asked the engineer not to do it. Then there was a great agitation in the Agraharam and all the Brahmins were angry with me. "You are a Social Reformer, but you have no right as Chairman to force your views on us. You

have put these untouchable employees on to the Agraharam merely to worry us. There are so many places where you could have put them." I had numerous friends all over the Agraharam, all co-workers in various activities; and one of them said, "My old mother is objecting to use the water. Help me." Another said, "My aunt has not bathed". And a third, "Do you wish to kill my grandmother? She has not eaten at all for two days." All the widows cast looks of hatred at me as I passed along. I knew how they loathed the touch and contamination of an 'untouchable.'

Now it was lucky that the Mahatma had not promulgated his Satyagraha in those days. If they had known it then, they would have used it against me straight away. They would have all gone on hungerstrike. They had a genuinely felt grievance and would certainly have given up their food with ease and with a sense of complete martyrdom. What would have been my fate? Even the Government would have telegraphed to me to withdraw the 'untouchables' from the Agraharam ward. Government would have told me, "Your social reform is right but you do not know your people," and would have ordered the transfer of the untouchable stop-cock men over my head.

Luckily, however, Satyagraha was not then known to the good people of the Agraharam. So they did not go beyond verbal objections and moving propositions in the Council. They argued but I was obdurate and said, "You may have your religion or whatever it may be in your private capacity. The Municipality cannot make distinctions of caste. I cannot displace them. Today you ask for transferring them. If I transfer them to another ward, the people of that ward will also ask for a transfer of these unfortunate

men. It is better that you bear with them." They had no answer. They dared not suggest dismissal. After some time everything subsided. I too forgot all about it until sometime later. During the Reforms enquiry, before the Parliamentary Joint Committee, it was said, "There is no chance of Democracy progressing in India with its innumerable castes and distinctions." Then the late Mr. K. T. Paul who was a Salem man and who was there said, "One municipal chairman, a Brahmin, did succeed in fighting caste distinctions in his municipality. India is changed." When I was told of this I was reminded of the affair and when the Brahmin friends of Salem who had objected to the employment of the untouchable men heard of the Joint Committee reference, they too were glad and thought it was rather good I had been obstinate.

Before this, shortly after I started practice as Vakil at Salem, I put two 'Panchama' boys to school. Strong objection was taken to this. The teachers said, "All the boys will stop away. Do you want two Panchama boys to be educated and 200 Caste boys to stop away for that reason? Do you want education or notoriety? For God's sake, do not insist on this. You will ruin the school. Please withdraw your boys." But I insisted. Some of the caste boys dropped away. But not many. One of the Panchama boys passed and got a government appointment somewhere in the district. That quarrel also was forgotten after sometime. It became an ordinary thing in Salem for Adi-Dravida boys to sit with other boys and nobody raised any objection.

When I was municipal chairman later, I sent two Adi-Dravida Students for training in the Secondary

instilled into them in the schools. They cannot get rid of this idea, which has got in like mother's milk into their minds. They have built fresh theories based upon this first prejudice. To make out a national quarrel between North and South out of the Ramayana would be as funny as to imagine that Rider Haggard's She was based on facts and to sit to investigate it. They have made Ravana the representative of the Tamil people, and are trying to make out that he is the better man of the two. Andhras should not laugh, for there is a serious battle going on amongst the Tamil people over this. It may look funny to the Telugus. If Valmiki or whoever wrote the Ramayana invented a figure, cruel and terrible alike in shape and in character, some of our people are struggling to make out that he is our lineal ancestor. Allegory is converted into History and people are trying to quarrel with each other over it.

It is absurd to make out the history of our ancestors from the imagination of a poet, who composed his poem with a purpose, that of showing the fight between good and evil. Ramayana is not the only book in which Rakshasas and Asuras are described. Earlier than the Ramayana, there was a fight between the Suras and Asuras, and they churned the ocean with Vasuki for a rope and the Meru as a churning rod. These things certainly do not refer to the Tamil people. They are all great fancies and powerful allegories; not satires or parodies of what really happened or libels against enemies.

If we have no history let us confess that we have no history. Let us not manufacture libels from mere stories. If scholars' theories remained merely theories, they would

have been amusing, but they are made into politics and have given rise to animosities and disturbances and rivalries amongst people. In the Tamil country some people have even thought it fit to call themselves Ravana and Kumbhakarna. The word Rakshasa or Asura, or the name Ravana or Kumbhakarna represents Evil. They are personifications of evil intended to create horror and dislike of cruelty, greed, sloth etc. The skill and genius of poets have invested them with life. So some of our people imagine that they are their grandfathers! Suppose even this theory of ancient races opposed to each other were true; now after the lapse of ages, why should we create a moral and psychological difficulty in the way of unification of our people?

It would be as absurd as if I went to England and started a theory that the quarrel between St. George and the Dragon was a historical quarrel and that the Dragon was the Celt and St. George the Saxon. The English people have made the best use of their stories of St. George and the Dragon and of King Arthur. They have used them for the development of morality and poetry, but we have recently made our Ramayana and Mahabharata the cause of quarrels and mutual animosities. Poetic art creates beauties even in the character of bad people. There is art and beauty in the character of Ravana and Shylock and others. But to make racial quarrels out of these fictions is the height of absurdity.

No one would enjoy better than myself a criticism of Rama and his conduct and of Ravana and his conduct. Ravana was learned, respected Sita, was proud and calm while Rama committed many errors. We must not fall

into the trap of racial warfare on account of the theories of scholars. In spite of all the beauties in Ravana's character, Ravana is the personification of Evil and the allegory is a fight between Good and Evil. Duryodhana and Sakuni too are personifications of evil. We cannot make out of these characters any attacks on the Tamil people. Sakuni may be said to be a Raja of a western kingdom and Gandhari, daughter of a Gandhara king and for that reason should the Punjab people quarrel with somebody?

Unfortunately in his Ramayana, Valmiki made Rama go south in search of Sita. If he had made Ravana go north or west, this theory would not have arisen. Even if all the people in the Tamil country go on with this quarrel, I request those who have been here and moved with me to avoid these quarrels. The English people do not rake up the quarrels between Saxons and Danes, Scotch and English: they read past history in a spirit of joy and pride, not to create or renew hatred and rivalry. We who have so much to do in the present as a united people have no business to create disunion, based on the characters of dead poets or even real facts of ancient history.

It is wrong to imagine that Dravidians are only in South India. Even in Bengal and Nepal you will find Dravidians. They are mixed up everywhere. You may look upon me as an Aryan because I am a Brahmin. But I am looked upon as a Dravidian in Northern India I speak the Dravidian language, I do not know the Aryan tongue. When things are mixed up like this—and mixing up is what we want in National life—it is foolish to divide again. Think of naming boys Ravana and Kumbhakarna in preference to Rama and Lakshmana! If they want Dravidian names, let

them have. I wish they chose some beautiful names, instead of taking the names of those who were regarded for ages to have been ugly and bad. There is nothing wrong in criticism provided it does not lead to racial quarrels. There are even ancient criticisms of Rama's conduct towards Vali; and Valmiki has made a laboured attempt to justify Rama's conduct. There are many beautiful points in Shylock's character, for instance his affection for his daughter is magnificent. Judged from the standard of modern thought, the conduct of Bassanio and others towards Shylock is despicable. Morley quoted Shylock about the India question, "Hath not a jew eyes, hands," etc., pleading that there should be no racial discrimination. When a great poet touches anything it becomes beautiful, so even Ravana becomes beautiful at Valmiki's touch. But that does not make him a Dravidian ancestor. He is only a poet's creation.

VOLUNTARY SCAVENGERS

I see that some of our brethren are strongly opposing the proposal that those of us who are willing should do Sanitation work in the Jail. They are raising several objections.

Even mothers may get tired of attending to their children. May not the *toty* entertain the same feeling towards us? May he not ask, "Why do you think that I should always clean these people's dirt?" Do you want the Superintendent to force him to do it? Or do you think God has created him to do it? Or do you argue he does it better than

you can, on account of greater experience, and that therefore he should do it?

Mechanical methods should be devised to ensure proper sanitation. But till then should a particular class be condemned to that work? Some of you think that if you undertake the work, the authorities will make it a regular duty and force you to do it always. It is a fear quite unfounded. There will be no extension of this system by compulsion, but an increased respect towards us.

That if once we undertake it and then stop, *toties* will not be available is also an ungrounded fear. They are there always and will not disappear from prison. Government too wants the *toties* to be *toties*. They will not give this work to you easily for the asking.

Then some have expressed the doubt that our doing this work here will weaken our forces in the national struggle, because people would be frightened at having to do this sort of work if they joined the Congress, and so will have nothing to do with us. This is also absolutely incorrect. In Ahmedabad educated congressmen have sometimes undertaken this work of sweeping. They have not frightened any body off. On the other hand people liked them all the better for it.

I know the truth. Those who object to our undertaking the scavenging work in the jail are racking their brains to find some good argument; but the real reason is that those who do not like to do it themselves also feel that they cannot in justice let others do this difficult and dirty work. It is a good motive which moves them. We should therefore convince these objectors that we who are willing to do the work are not making any great sacrifice; that we are not

undergoing any pain or martyrdom on account of this. If we take up that attitude they will not only reconcile themselves to our doing it, but cooperate with us in making the work easier.

Now, Moderates tell us, "Don't go to jail, why do you go?" They do not like us to be in jail while they are all out. But what do we tell them? We are delighted and happy to go to jail. We say, "Your pity is for an imaginary pain; we have no pain in this business." I know a relation of mine who wept when I gave up my practice. He thought I felt great pain and commiserated me. As a matter of fact I had no pain when I left the business of pleading before ignorant and obstinate judges. Those who undertake this voluntary scavenging that is proposed, do it with pleasure and do not need any commiseration from the others.

Ever since Mahatmaji took up public work, he has been insisting upon the dignity of labour and on the necessity of the upper classes doing the work which the lower classes do. It is not possible to realise the practical difficulties until we actually do a thing. Mere talk and discussion cannot elicit difficulties. I know that at least half a dozen of you are vexed with me for pushing this proposal forward. I want them to bear with me. It is at least profitable if we learn to be patient with each other. Even if we don't succeed in doing the sanitary work, if we learn tolerance towards each other, even that is a gain.

If we must always have smooth sailing, we can do nothing in this world. I am told some of you threatened to offer Satyagraha against those that may start scavenging work. Now, it is absurd to believe that Satyagraha can be used wrongly like that. Satyagraha becomes violence when

applied for wrong purposes. Suppose Srinivasa Sastri and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru go on hunger strike so that the Mahatma may withdraw his obdurate demands, what would you say to that attitude? Can Mahatmaji's heart allow Sastriar to commit suicide, and therefore is he to give up the claim on behalf of India? I give this example to you because I know what great affection there is between Sastriar and Gandhiji. But Sastriar is too just a man to make such an experiment, because he knows it would mean sheer violence to do such a thing. The methods of Satyagraha are not available for carrying out wrong desires. It is as bad as using arsenic, which ought to be used as medicine, for killing people. I warn you, enthusiastic young men who have found a new weapon in Satyagraha, against the misuse of that weapon. Satyagraha used wrongly would mean the end of freedom. We must allow freedom of action to all people. We may never interfere with freedom of speech or action, when it does not hurt another. Leave every man to learn from his faults. If you adopt this attitude you will learn to tolerate and have peace.

If we make no new experiments there is no progress possible. If we make experiments there is always some harm. So a certain degree of caution and a certain amount of adventure— both are necessary. Look at the opportunities we have here in prison. You cannot have a better association of people set on one purpose, than we have here among us. If we cannot do such things here, where else can we hope to do then? Will you be able to experiment scavenging outside prison? Here there is every facility. There are no friends to laugh or relations to object. True brotherhood and a correct negative attitude

towards Caste will be created most successfully in this service.

In Western countries aristocratic families in the last century used to go and live in slums with workmen, so that they may have a taste of that life. A spirit of adventure moved them, the same that makes some go to the Arctic Ocean. That spirit of adventure is the symptom of real life. Life does not consist in merely shaking the limbs. An epileptic does that.

If we start scavenging and do it successfully, it would be the most illustrious chapter in our Satyagraha. It is no hardship whatever. It is as much a hardship as having to bathe. Suppose we have secured somebody to massage and wash us, and then one day we proposed to do it ourselves, would it be a hardship? If I propose that slavery should be abolished, it is not the imposition of hardship on ourselves. The West has abolished slavery—the undignified labour imposed by compulsion upon others. I do not think we have abolished slavery so long as we impose scavenging by compulsion on others. The moment we successfully do scavenging for ourselves, that work becomes free and dignified. So that if anybody takes it up afterwards, it is free labour, and not the compulsion of Caste.

I have spoken much. We should have no need to discuss it, because coming with the name of Gandhiji on our lips, we cannot object in this matter. But I want nobody to be forced to join the Scavenging corps for mere competitive feeling or because of pressure of public opinion.

RELIGION

Whatever else I have read or studied, I have not studied books on our religion. My religion I have learnt only from my mother. I did not learn it from any book or under any Guru. What I learnt from my mother has not been contradicted by anything that I learnt afterwards.

A little knowledge of Science unsettles our ideas regarding Religion. But a deeper study of Western sciences will enable us the better to understand religion, especially Hindu religion. There are many discoveries of modern science at which we wonder. We admire the railway, the telegraph, the airship and the wireless, but the greatest wonder is the Unity of the Spirit that pervades the whole Universe. Even the smallest thing is as difficult to be comprehended completely as God Himself. We cannot understand the very word "complete". When I was a child and learnt 1, 2, 3, I thought at some point the numbers would end, where I could stop. Now I understand they end nowhere. Whatever the number may be I could add one to it. They cannot be carried to the farthest limit. It is infinite. Not only have we no end counting upwards, but what is more wonderful you are in an infinite maze even if you count downwards by dividing and again dividing. The smallest thing can yet be divided, just as the biggest thing multiplied. Where is this thing to end? So that, on a slate and with the help of a pencil, you can see the infinity of God.

If you look at the sky on a clear night you find numerous stars. If you take a strong telescope you will

see in a little bit of the same sky as many stars as you see in the whole sky without telescope. The Universe is infinite. The greatest knowledge is the discovery that we cannot understand anything. Nothing can be completely understood, you can only understand it as a whole and in a rough way. If you go deep, the simplest thing is a secret and a mystery. You know that there was a wise man called Socrates in Greece. He insisted again and again that we cannot know things, so that however learned we may be, our first duty is to be humble. Just as Mahatma Gandhi is in politics to us, so Newton is in the world of science. Newton even now is considered to be the greatest man of science of all time, and he said that our knowledge and researches are like picking shells on the sands of the ocean. So much of the ocean is there vast and unknown. After picking a few shells thrown here and there upon the beach, we imagine that we have learnt all about the ocean. We must approach knowledge with a due sense of humility and reverence like Newton. It is only if we are humble that we can succeed in learning anything.

The modern discoveries of Science do not at all contradict Religion. I look upon both as the same sort of thing and therefore I see no contradiction in them. Do not imagine that to marry a girl at the age of ten is Hinduism or to shave the head of a widow of sixteen is Hinduism. Don't imagine that to put on a triple strand of handspun thread over your shoulders is Hinduism or that to paint your forehead in a variety of ways is Hinduism. These customs are like the waves on the surface of the Ocean of Hinduism. Don't imagine that only the waves

constitute the ocean. The waves may stop but the ocean remains. Even if you changed all your customs you would still be Hindu, you would not become a Mussalman or a Christian or an Atheist.

You see a man, Rama. What is it that we call and recognise as Rama? Rama is not his hands, feet or head. Even if smallpox attacked him and his face were disfigured, even if he should lose his feet or eyes or if any other changes take place in his body, we have the same love and respect or aversion or hatred towards him. The man, we may say, consists of a group of feelings, thoughts and ideas; he is not the body. Even if the thoughts change, even if his character should change, we hold on to the man, his personality. He is therefore not even in the thoughts; he is somewhere behind the thoughts. It is he that thinks, speaks, moves and acts. This is the fundamental of all religion.

Now I shall tell you what I have understood to be the essential part of Hinduism. Wherever there is a cause there is an effect. If you put a stone in water you will find the water ripple, that ripple will produce another ripple, that again will produce a third and so on, and we may say not even God can stop it. If you add 2 and 2 it becomes 4; can God change it? It is only if you understand this that you can understand what I consider the essential of Hinduism.

Every bad thought in our mind is a painful ripple in the Universal Spirit, or put in a different way, is a stab in the heart of God. That is why some sages imagine that God is shedding tears whenever we think any bad thought. Just as we do not see but know how "wireless" vibrations started in America can be received here, even if there is no

wire across the "ether,"—we may assume that there is an all-pervading substance which receives the shock of every bad thought though we may not see it. Do not imagine that 'wireless" waves are a peculiar invention of some European called Marconi. It is only a discovery of what was going on from time immemorial. The vibrations were going on from eternal time back, and men of Science just discovered them one day.

Imagine a deaf man who sees the whole beautiful world but hears nothing. He suddenly discovers his ears. He finds vast noise all over the world and he wonders that he did not hear it at all so long. Similarly there is a deafness of the soul which disables us from perceiving the vibrations or ripples of good and bad thoughts, If we were relieved of this deafness of the soul and suddenly began to feel the vibrations of thoughts pervading the whole world, we would then wonder how there was so much evil going on in the world and we did not prevent it. Just as sleep is a blessing,—when we are tired we go to sleep and are happy for ten or twelve hours though we may have many reasons for unhappiness during the other twelve hours,—we may say that God has blessed us with this deafness so that we may live in peace in this world which is full of evil thoughts.

As there are some people who light a lamp and read when they should sleep there are a few mad people who want to find the truth of soul vibrations, even though God has blessed us with a useful deafness in that respect. This is religious speculation and philosophy. Follow the same mad fellow who lights his lamp at night. He reads for some time, then he grows

tired of the whole business, puts out the lamp and goes to sleep. Similarly a man may grow tired of his religion and go to sleep. But there are a few people like those who sang the Upanishads, and like those who are carrying on scientific researches in the West. Both belong to the class of mad men, who light their lamps at night and go on bothering with knowledge and dying for it. It is their work we call Religion, their work we call Science.

I will tell you about Karma—it may be only my doctrine of Karma—perhaps may be different from what the shastris have told you, but later on you may find there is no difference. Just as the very simple idea of universal natural attraction called by Newton, Gravitation, is a simple thing, and yet was the basis of all the complicated calculations and theories of science until recently, so also the Karmic doctorine is an extremely simple thing to understand and yet is the basis of all the complicated ideas of Hindu religion. It is very simple things that are the foundation of all things. The doctrine of Karma is that whatever we do, immediately an effect is produced. We cannot escape it. Not that we will be punished later on or get a heaven or hell, but an effect is immediately produced.

Action includes thought, and word, as well as what we ordinarily call action. For instance, if I see somebody possess a thing and feel jealous, and think how nice it would be if I got it, it is a kind of theft. Just as there is robbery, burglary and different kinds of theft, so also this thought is one kind of theft.

There was a French philosopher who wrote, "Imagine a man residing somewhere in France could get the

property of a wealthy man in China, who was not a relation or a friend or even known at all—and to kill him needed no effort but to press a button in France, and there was a guarantee that nobody could know anything about it, it would be absolutely secret, yet certain to produce the result; who was there who would not press that button and get that inheritance"? Though strikingly put, this was a wrong view. Another French Philosopher immediately wrote in answer to it that even under such circumstances a wise and good man would not press the button and kill the man. The mind which is our most valuable possession would be spoiled by that very thought of killing the man in China and not all the wealth would be compensation enough. Even though nobody need know it and no physical harm will come to you, still your most beautiful and precious possession is ruined by an evil thought and therefore you abstain from it.

It is well-known that if we misbehave in respect of women, we are likely to catch disease. The doctrine of Karma says, "Even though you do not catch syphilis or any other disease, there is a disease which you unfailingly catch by your bad action". What is that disease? When we do a thing we are inclined to do it again. We prepare and shape ourselves more easily and readily to do it again. Whatever thought or action we go through once, it gets a title for easy reoccupation. I do not use, I find it difficult to use foul language; but once I use it, the second time it becomes easy for me. I fear to go in the dark; once I go, the second time it becomes easy. There is not a child but if it does a thing once, it is easy for it to do it a second

time. Once I think a bad thought or utter a bad word or do a bad action, my character, more delicate than a waxen image whose shape the slightest touch spoils, has been altered to that extent.

Our character is a delicate living thing. It grows through Eternity. Once you do anything it receives and retains the impression at once. The slightest evil that you do leaves its ugly and indelible impression behind. You cannot go back on what you have thought or done.

Death is not a wiping off of the slate. We do not end there or begin anew. After death we continue as with an opening balance. The Hindu belief is that the shape which one has given to oneself in this life is the shape with which the soul proceeds on the next journey. Our character, as we build it with our thoughts and actions, is not only our greatest possession, but is also our inalienable inheritance. We live for all time, every one of us. We close our account now and then, but the balance is carried forward to the next page.

Supposing you don't believe in a future life at all. Still the law of Karma is important enough even for a single life. That is to say, even if there is no life beyond, it is operative enough, and a sufficient motive for us to guard the beauty and purity of our character. What we think and do today spoils or improves us for tomorrow. Within the limit of our life the same law applies as a Hindu believes for eternity and through countless births. Let us not therefore foolishly spoil our character for temporary pleasures. The source of happiness in life is our character. If that is spoiled we cannot easily repair it.

So then, every act of ours affects our character

permanently. We must be afraid of evil for a double reason. If you believe that your character is an attachment to your soul even after death, it becomes a hundred-fold more important to preserve the purity of your character. Even if there is no punishment for evil other than that the evil we do immediately and irrevocably spoils our character, it is a terrible consequence. Suppose if you are jealous of somebody else's property, you grow an ugly tail as soon as you entertain that thought, who would care to think jealous thoughts? An uglier tail than the monkey's, grows upon your character, when you entertain envious thoughts about another's wealth. The mischief done to character by evil thoughts and actions is greater and more ugly than the addition of an ugly tail to the body.

According to the law of Karma everything we do makes us better or worse to that extent. Our religious books give technical terms to these things, but I put it in common language. When you do a good act you have beautified your character. When you do a bad act you have ruined your character permanently to that extent. We should think and do every little thought or act with this knowledge. I go to a friend's house. I am not used to drinking tea. He offers a cup of tea. Once I take that tea I become a tea-drinker to that extent. The next day I will take it without much hesitation. The third day I shall want it. If one utters a lie today, an honest man becomes a liar to that extent, and the next time he hesitates less, the third time he will want to. utter a lie, and his honesty is ruined.

Now, if it is so terrible—this punishment—immediate and unescapable, though it is extremely simple and easy to

understand, it seems to be a creed without Hope. Is there no way out of it? Yes. There is a way. Character is given hard knocks by every deed and thought of yours, but you can knock it into shape if you like. Suppose you are shaping an image of iron or brass. You beat it into shape every day by your thoughts and actions. Suppose by an error or accident it loses its shape, you can depend on this very law of cause and effect and beat it back into shape. This is the law of freedom of action that is involved in the law of cause and effect or Karma. If you go out of shape you can beat yourself back into shape. On the one hand every blow has its effect; on the other you have the right to give another blow in order to correct the previous impression. But remember once you do an evil act you are impelled in the same direction, and you have therefore to take special care and make additional effort in order to correct yourself. That special effort is Repentance. Hinduism lays down on the one hand the unavoidability of Karma, and on the other hand it gives freedom even for the greatest sinner to recover from that sin.

In every evil or good thought or action, there is a kind of craving produced. Just as alcohol produces a craving, there is a kind of universal law of craving. Whatever we do there is a craving for it again. Just as Newton said, "Every particle attracts every other particle", so the Hindu philosopher says every act creates a craving for a similar act again. There are two consequences for every act; as when a man drinks alcohol he feels intoxicated and does things which he would not do if he were in his normal senses, and it has also another effect, viz., he has got the craving to drink again. This craving is a subsidiary and

permanent punishment which holds on even after the intoxication has passed away.

I want to get money somehow at once for I have contracted debts. My father is an old man who has property and he is suffering from diabetes, or some other terrible disease and it would be better for me that he dies soon. So I do away with him secretly and silently. Nobody suspects me, everybody thinks he has died a natural death. If my neighbours suspect me I am punished with a scandal. If the King knows it, I am punished. But over and above that, and whether the neighbours, or the King's Magistrates know it or not, my character is spoiled. Supposing I contract more debts. Next time I see that a friend has got a large sum of money with him. I entertain the thought of murdering him too for the sake of that money. So for every act there are two consequences, first the immediate punishment, and secondly the Karmic punishment, namely the inclination to do it again. Murder and crime are perhaps incomprehensible for you. Let me give smaller illustrations. You feel inclined to make water and you sit down for it where the Superintendent does not want you to sit down. Even though nobody may see it, once you do it, the second time you are disinclined to go all the way to the latrine, and you feel inclined to sit at the same spot again. If you drink coffee your stomach is injured. Over and above that you get the habit of drinking coffee which you cannot cure. This double consequence of every act has to be understood in order to understand the law of Karma. Just as the man who is in the habit of drinking coffee has to get over that habit by substitution, so also by good acts and their effect the evil effects of our bad action can be got over. If you

wish to live according to the law of Karma, you must walk in life ever looking upon your character as your most sacred and valuable possession: as carefully as you would travel when carrying a bag of glass chimneys on your back, which nobody may see, but will break if you knock against something.

If anybody says to you that the doctorine of Karma is all fatalism, and there is no Hope in it, tell him that the Hindu doctrine gives the greatest freedom and independence to man to correct his soul and reshape it.

All bad thoughts that come to your mind you should reject. Once you allow a single bad thought to enter your mind, the next moment they will come in larger numbers just like an enemy's forces breaking into a citadel. Including even Buddhism and Jainism, every religion that has its origin or life in India, accepts the doctrine of Karma as a fact. The varied experience of all our people have led them to accept it, though they have fought bitterly with each other on every other point.

There are people in England and modern Europe who never bother about the future life, who think the present life is enough trouble for them. Even these in their conduct accept the truth that every bad action hurts a man's character and they try to maintain the purity of their lives and actions. If we go another step, we realise that we are only parts of a big Universal Spirit, and if I do a wrong action, it is a distemper of the Universal one, like a stomach-ache in the human body. If I spoil my character I spoil God to that extent, and should therefore abstain from that. To protect our character from impurity, and to protect the Universal Spirit from impurity—this is our responsibility.

I want Mussalmans to understand the Hindu religion correctly, and even to be proud of Hinduism in a way, as the great religion of the land of their birth. If I were a Hindu born in Arabia I would be proud of Mohamed and of Islam. I would be angry with anybody who spoke ill of Mohamed. I would consider it my duty to study Islam, my first duty, if I were a Hindu born in Arabia. Similarly, if I were a Hindu born in Palestine I would consider the religion of Christ one of the first things to be understood and respected, and I would give my vote to spend large sums of money in order to protect the temples of Christ, just as today you find the civilised Britisher spending large sums of money to protect Hindu and Moghul monuments and temples. I want you all therefore to understand the doctrine of Karma in Hinduism. Even Christians and Mussalmans should understand it, as I said, provided they are Indians, because the doctrine of Karma is the essential part of Hinduism. It is Hinduism itself.

ON THE EVE OF DEPARTURE

It is unnecessary for me to speak today. I have been speaking to you all these days. Your minds are transparent to me like glass and so also my mind is to you; so what is the need to speak?

You began the proceedings with praises of me in verse It was tolerable because it was in verse and not easily understood. When you began to explain it in prose it became bad. Then you went on to speak like public speakers and the audience began to behave as at public

meetings, making noise and clapping hands and all that. The whole gathering has become a sort of public meeting.

You have been finding many similes and metaphors and all that. I usually revel in analogies, but today I fail to find any suitable analogy to express the feelings in my mind, the reason being that my sorrow is so great that my brain is not working. I am feeling like the daughter who is leaving her mother's house for her mother-in-law's. I shall not find such loving people outside as I have found amongst you here. This is truly what I feel. I have understood you and you have understood me. In the outside world, I cannot come into such intimate contact with people and they cannot see or understand me truly as you, my dear friends, have done.

The best service that you can do for me when you go out in your turn is to try and infect other people with the same affection towards me as you have. I would then be able to do some service to them. Even if you do not manage to create good feeling in other people towards me, at least try to give the message of general good feeling to all people. Let people love each other and not distrust each other: that will do, even if I am altogether out of it. If this is remembered by you I shall think it was useful I stayed with you these five months. I do not think I can make myself clear to you at all today. I feel it would have been better if you and I had come in for 6 years, instead of 6 months.

Yesterday I made an entry in my notebook, that I had not found such leisure in jail this time as I found within the three months I was in Vellore jail some years ago. The fact that I found no leisure is proof that I spent my time